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EAT magazine

YOUR DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO THE FOOD & DRINK OF VICTORIA & VANCOUVER ISLAND

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COVER: *Summer Zucchini Tart*
Photo by **Michael Tourigny**, Styled by **Jennifer Danter**.

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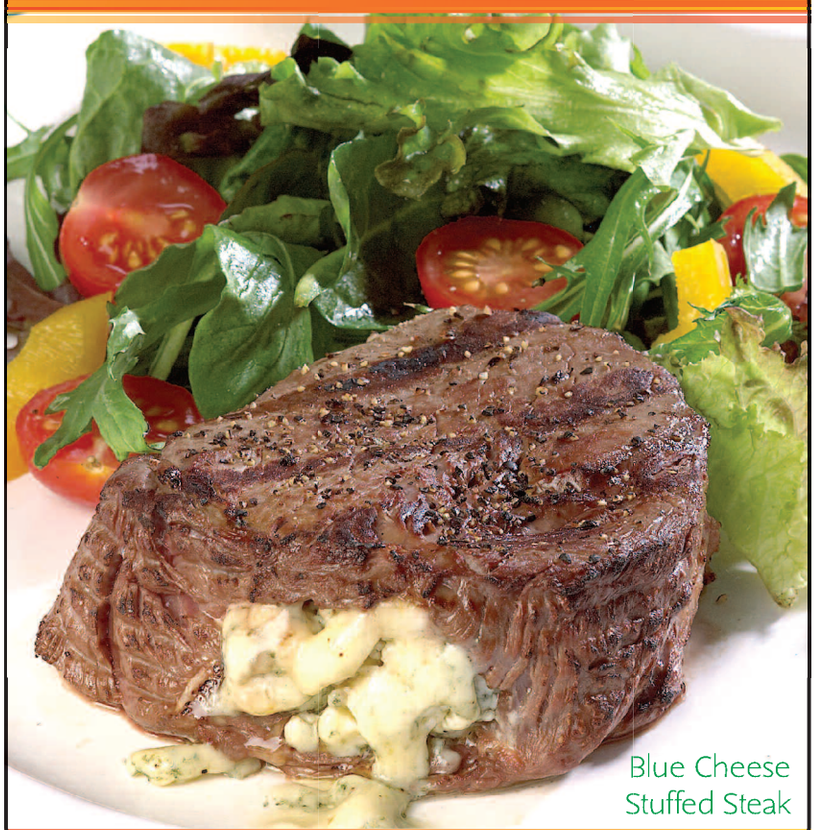

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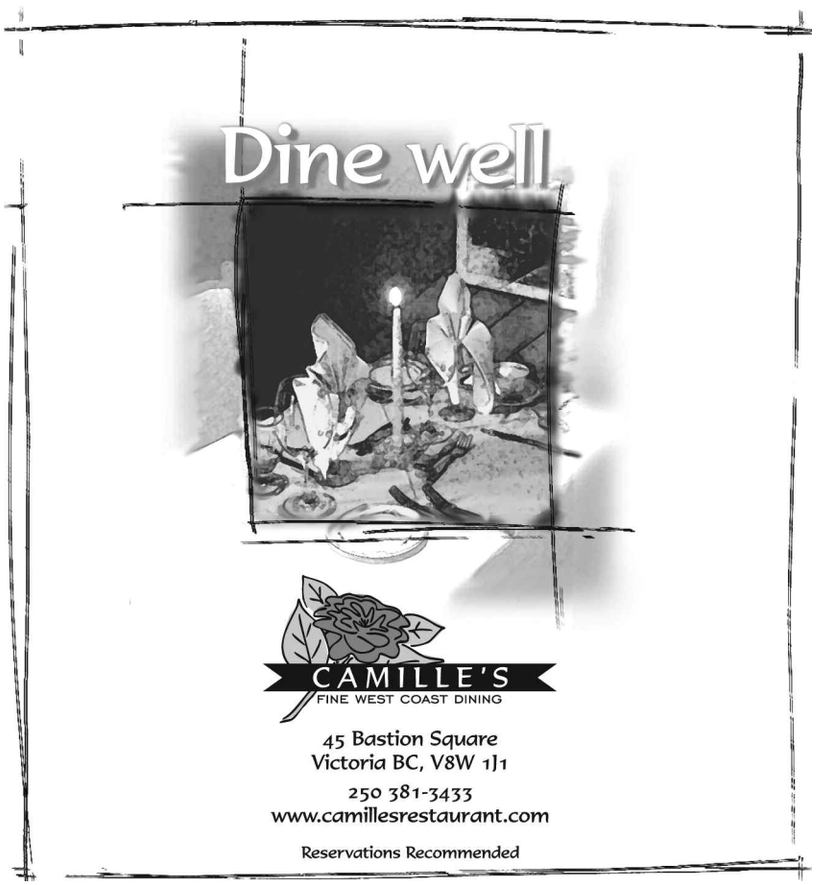

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Notes From the Underground

In this issue we tackle two trends that are gaining momentum and helping to shape the way we eat.

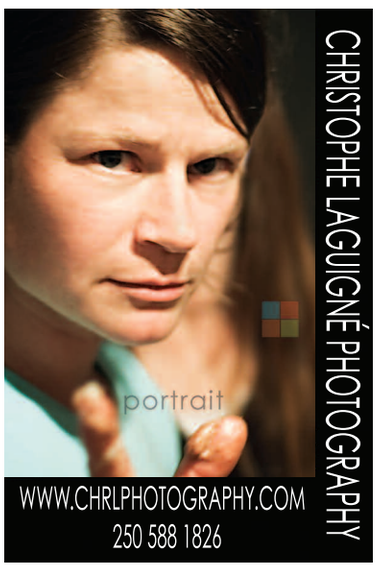
Radical chefs

The deconstruction of the fine dining restaurant continues as chefs move beyond the main street restaurant space and find creative ways to reach the eating public. Avoiding commitments to expensive leases, they are opening pop-up restaurants that appear and disappear overnight in empty warehouse spaces; launching guerilla mobile eateries that advertise through email and Twitter on which street corner lunch will be found today; and quietly sending out friend-of-a-friend-only invitations to BYO dinners in out-of-the-way barns. These refugees from fine dining kitchens are cooking outside the mainstream, not only for financial reasons but for a desire to breakdown established systems and for the thrill and freedom to cook whatever and whenever they want. In this issue contributor Sandra McKenzie takes us inside an underground restaurant, and describes the scene, the food and the motivation behind one such restaurant.

Organic Meat

When *EAT* received a letter from a reader asking us to please tell her where she could find local and organic meats, we decided to find out for her. Spurred on by seeing films like *Food, Inc.*, I knew I wanted to eat safer, more nutritious meat that is raised more humanely and closer to home. And this being *EAT*, I also knew I wanted my meat to be flavourful as well. Our web editor, Rebecca Baugniet, volunteered for the task and the results of her search can be found starting on page 21. Pin this guide up on your fridge and refer to it often.

Have a great summer and good eating,
—Gary Hynes, Editor



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July

ROCKY CREEK WINERY PIG ROAST IN THE VINEYARD
This Canada Day, **July 1st,** Sean O'Connell from Equinox Catering is returning to Rocky Creek Winery to show you how everyone can have great fine food even outside! We will be roasting the pig from Quist Meats with the help of our friends at Damali Lavender Farm, Dave and Marsha. They will have everything set up and will start early in the morning so that when you arrive at 6 pm, things should be well under way. $100 Per Person. For tickets, call 250-748-5622. (*www.rockycreekwinery.ca*)

LIFESTYLE MARKETS' 15th ANNIVERSARY
Lifestyle Markets celebrates 15 years of healthy lifestyles in Victoria! Join the festivities on **July 9** & **10** and **July 16** & **17** at their Douglas Street location where you'll find lots of wonderful foods to sample, draw prizes, natural product experts as well as some really good birthday cake.

MOUNT WASHINGTON BEERFEST
The 11th Annual Mt. Washington Beerfest will take Friday, **July 9th.** For package information and tickets visit *www.mountwashington.ca* or 1-888-231-1499.

CATCH A WINERY TOUR
On **July 11th**, get on the shuttle bus and leave the driving to Randy and the boys. Hop on at the White Spot in Woodgrove Mall, near Staples at Brooks Landing, or Art of Brewing 2510 South Wellington Road. The trip include pick up, transportation into the Cowichan Valley, tours and tastings at three wineries, (or cidery or brewery) lunch, a diversion, a tour of Art of Brewing and Winemaking and snacks, tea, coffee, and cold drinks at Ravenwood Acres next door. We help you get home safely. Phone Maureen at 250 754 5000 for reservations. Email: *ravenwoodacres@shaw.ca* for more details.

HEALTHY CUISINE FROM THE GARDENS OF BC
This weeklong UBC culinary arts summer program, running from **July 12-16th** focuses on healthy recipes and uses locally grown organic ingredients. Learn to prepare balanced and healthy gourmet meals using modern and traditional cooking techniques, and learn the history of BC food culture while enjoying a beautifully presented dinner. The menu may include Salt Spring Island goat cheese salad surprise, cedar plank wild salmon crusted with green onions, stuffed Chilliwack rabbit legs, fresh BC cherry and Okanagan Pinot Noir reduction, Indian Kosambri salad and curry, and apricot tarts with almonds, pistachios and rosemary frangipane. You'll leave the course with exceptional recipes to prepare at home. Register early as enrolment is limited. $525, includes course materials, a chef's apron and five multi-course meals. (*www.languages.ubc.ca/culinaryarts*)

TASTE: VICTORIA'S FESTIVAL OF FOOD AND WINE
Thursday **July 15**, Taste: Victoria's Festival of Food and Wine will launch with The Main Event – a delicious and generous cuisine and wine tasting. This unique evening offers tastings of over 100 British Columbia wines as well as the most amazing local cuisine presented by some of the best Vancouver Island chefs. One ticket price ($79) allows you to savour cuisine from Victoria restaurants that walk the talk with locally grown, sustainable products. Chat with distinguished chefs, vintners, cheesemakers, farmers, cider makers, tea masters and more. Events continue through to Sunday, July 18th. View the full calendar of events and find ticket purchase information online (*www.victoriataste.com*).

CHEFS ACROSS THE WATER AT HASTINGS HOUSE
Hastings House on Salt Spring has announced a guest chef program called Chefs across the Water. With an impressive line-up including John Bishop (Bishop's) (**July 19th**) and Frank Pabst (Blue Water Café) (**August 9th**), these dinners will feature Salt Spring produce, seafood, meats and BC wine pairings. A portion of the proceeds from these dinners will go to the Salt Spring Abattoir project. For more details, visit *www.chefsacrossthewater.com*.

ROMANCING THE DESERT
Each year under a summer full moon the Osooyos Desert Centre is the site of the most magical evening. On this special night you can stroll along our mile long boardwalk sipping fine BC wines & feasting on local culinary creations. **July 24th**, 6-11pm. (250-495-2470) Osoyoos Desert Centre, Osoyoos.

FOXGLOVE FARM SUMMER CAMP FOR KIDS
A farm, arts and culinary summer day camp for children ages 7–12. The five day "farm camp" offers environmental literacy experiences through the exploration of a variety of habitats; by growing, harvesting, and eating organic fruits and vegetables, feeding and caring for farm animals, and through nature-based art and literature, using child-centered, fun activities. Each day children will take part in farm chores such as collecting eggs, harvesting strawberries, digging potatoes, making compost, baking, cooking and eating from the farm. They will then use art and journaling to express and enhance their experience. Runs from July 26th to 30th. (*www.foxglovefarmbc.ca/*)

August

FEAST IN THE MOUNTAINS
Feast in the Mountains showcases BC's culinary bounty by transforming Whistler's Rebagliati Park into a roaming gourmet sampling of local foods on Sunday, **August 1st**, 2010 from 1 -5 pm. Spend a summer's afternoon amidst BC's Coastal Mountains, wonder the park and savour the creations of BC's best. Visit each vendor booth comprising of award-winning chefs, farmers, food artisans, vintners and brewers for a sampling of their offerings. Tickets available on-line and will finish 3 days prior to the event. If availability allows, tickets will also be available at the gate on the day. (*www.feastofthemountains.com*)

PENTICTON PEACH FESTIVAL
PEACHFEST is an annual, South Okanagan Valley tradition, which first began in 1947, to celebrate the peach harvest in Penticton. 2010 is the 63rd annual Peachfest! This five day extravaganza will feature fantastic live entertainment often including, but not limited to, bands, solo/duo acts, dancers, martial arts demonstrations, hypnotist shows, a wide variety of food & merchandise vendors, arts and crafts exhibits, authentic aboriginal arts & crafts, two parades, various competitions, and even a Square Dance Festival! Peachfest 2010 will kick off on Wednesday, **August 4**, on the shores of Okanagan Lake in Downtown Penticton and runs until August 8th. (*www.peachfest.com*).

ALPINE WINE FESTIVAL
The Mt. Washington Alpine Wine Festival will take place Friday, **August 6th.** For package information and tickets visit www.mountwashington.ca or 1-888-231-1499.

FIELD TO PLATE WORKSHOP AT FOXGLOVE
On Sunday, **August 8th**, from 1:00pm -5.30 pm, farmer Michael Ableman and Chef Laurie Munn from Victoria's Cafe Brio will be conducting the second installment in the three part 'Field to Plate' workshop series. The class will begin in the fields, harvesting and tasting seasonal ingredients and learning about the history of various foods and the ways in which they are grown. The class will then move to the Foxglove kitchen/classroom where Laurie will demonstrate several dishes followed by a shared sit down meal. (*www.foxglovefarmbc.ca*

SOOKE REGION FARM AND FOOD GARDEN TOUR
Participate in a self-guided tour of 5 food gardens and 5 working farms on Saturday, **August 8th**, from 11am -5pm. Tickets are $10 and will be available after July 8 at Moss Street Market, Sooke Country Market, Double D Gardens, Westburn gardens and Shoppers Drug Mart in Sooke. Proceeds to Sooke Region Food CHI's Farm Mentorship Program.

GALIANO WINE FESTIVAL
The 2010 Galiano Wine Festival, an event to benefit the Health Care Society, will be held on **Saturday, August 14**, 2010 from 1PM - 4PM at the Lions Field on Galiano Island. Lions Park, 912 Burrill Rd., Galiano Island. (250-539-5976).

OKANAGAN SUMMER WINE FESTIVAL
The Okanagan Summer Wine Festival is held every second weekend in August at Silver Star Mountain Resort in Vernon. The summer wine festival offers unique wine seminars, great evening entertainment, a foot stomping musical outdoor wine tasting & wonderful presentations by local artists. Running from Friday **August 13**, 2010 to Sat **August 14** . (*www.thewinefestivals.com*)

AGASSIZ SLOW FOOD CYCLE TOUR 2010
Visit Agassiz (6 km from Harrison Hot Springs) on Saturday, **August 21st** to participate in a self-guided bicycle ride following the popular Circle Farm Tour. Embark on a leisurely cycle & learn more about local food production. The self-guided tour begins at the Fall Fair Grounds in Agassiz where you'll receive a map you can follow to the various farm locations. There are ten stops on the route & you can take the tour as fast or as slow as you would like. Visit the Slow Food Vancouver website for (*www.slowfoodvancouver.com*)

SMALL-SCALE GRAIN PRODUCTION WORKSHOP AT FOXGLOVE FARM
The Coastal Pacific Northwest traditionally grew all of its own cereal grains but over time the region transitioned to a commodity buyer rather than a producer. As a result the knowledge of local grain production has eroded. This workshop is intended for anyone wishing to grow grains for their own consumption or for supplying small-scale regional users such as bakers, maltsters, or livestock producers. The workshop is for beginners as well as for those who are already growing grains. Join wheat researcher and geneticist Stephen Jones and grain growers Nash Huber and Michael Doehnell to learn about types of cereal grains including heirloom and modern varieties, end-use qualities, variety selection, planting, cultivating, harvesting, and post harvest processing and storage techniques as well as machinery available for the small-scale producer. Running **August 24** at 7 pm; **August 25** & **26** from 9-4:30pm; and **August 27** from 9-10:30am. (*www.foxglovefarmbc.ca*)

ALPINE FOOD FESTIVAL
The Mt. Washington Food Festival will take place Sept **3rd – 5th** and will feature locally grown food and globally inspired flavours. Wine & Cheese Reception, Cuinary Classes, a Gala Dinner and the Alpine Marketplace. For package information and tickets visit www.mountwashington.ca or 1-888-231-1499

GREAT CANADIAN BEER FESTIVAL
Tickets go sale **July 24th** for the 2010 Great Canadian Beer Festival (Friday, **Sept 10** & Saturday, **Sept 11**). *www.gcbf.com* or 250-383-2332. Sells out fast! In support of Santa's Anonymous.

FEAST OF FIELDS
Finally, the marriage of local foods and culinary arts is enjoying a broader audience in both British Columbia and around the world. And with such a rich bounty of local foods available year round, it's easy to see why. Feast of Fields is FarmFolk/CityFolk's annual fundraiser. Net proceeds support their work year round as they help to create a sustainable food system for British Columbia. Not only will guests have a great culinary experience but they will also be investing in a secure food future.
The Okanagan Feast of Fields will be held **August 22nd** from 1-5 pm. At this time, the host farm has not yet been announced.

The Wellbrook Winery will host the 16th annual Lower Mainland Feast of Fields on Sunday, **August 29th**, from 1pm- 5pm at Wellbrook Winery, located on Bremner Farm in Delta, BC. The Vancouver Island Feast of Fields will be held Sunday, **September 19th**, from 1-5 pm at the Parry Bay Sheep Farm in Metchosin. For ticket purchase information visit the Feast of Fields (*www.feastoffields.com*).

FOR MORE ON-GOING SUMMER EVENTS SEE PAGE 7

If you have a food or wine event you would like to see listed in the next issue of EAT, please email editor@eatmagazine.ca and put Concierge Desk in the subject line.

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COMPOSTING BASICS WORKSHOPS
On the first Saturday of every month (dates may vary due to holidays) the Compost Centre is offering a FREE two-hour Composting Basics workshop. Individuals may also register for any pre-scheduled workshop from our Sustainable Home and Garden Series. For more information on these workshops, or on other programs offered at the centre, please call (250) 386-9676. (*www.compost.bc.ca*)

THE OAK BAY VILLAGE NIGHT MARKET
Taking place on the third Wednesday of July, August and September, the night markets will feature local produce, artisans, music and special events in Oak Bay Village. The Oak Bay Village Night Market features produce from farms throughout southern Vancouver Island. The July produce theme is local tomatoes, with heritage and non-heritage varieties for sale as well as a range of seasonal spring vegetables including peppers, cucumbers and lettuce. Tomato plants and vegetable starts will also be for sale.

WALKING TOURS OF MADRONA FARM
Every Saturday throughout the summer at 9:30am, Madrona Farm Tour will be offering walking tours. Walk the fields of this 27-acre farm with Nathalie. Learn how this important ecological and agricultural treasure was saved, and buy some freshly picked vegetables at the same time. Meet at the farm stand, 4317 Blenkinsop Road.

DIRTY APRON COOKING SCHOOL KIDS CAMP
The Dirty Apron Cooking School is putting kids in the kitchen this summer. Beginning July 5th the school will launch its first kids camp with the goal of teaching children aged 7 to 11 and teens aged 12 to 17 the skills to prepare basic meals while learning about healthy eating and where their food comes from. The weeklong camp will focus on how to use a knife safely and with confidence, the basic building blocks of nutrition, and sourcing local ingredients. In addition to being armed with kitchen know-how, students will be in charge of dishing up their own menus, so by week's end they'll be crafting a healthy breakfast, lunch and dinner without furrowing a brow. Tuition for the camp is priced at $450 and includes a daily recipe book, closely supervised hands-on instruction and all meals. For more information, including daily menus please visit: *www.dirtyapron.com/classes*.

AMUSÉ BISTRO WILD FOOD TOURS
Amusé Bistro & Brother Michael, a Benedictine monk, of Solo del Monastery in the Cowichan Valley, have teamed up to offer you two great wild food foraging experiences! Summer Wild Berry Excursion ~ July You will learn how to identify and pick several varieties of wild berries found in the forests of the beautiful Cowichan Valley. Fall Mushroom Hunt ~ Sept & Oct Brother Michael will teach you how to find and identify some choice edible mushrooms, such as the yellow and white chanterelles, lobster and matsutake. $125 per person. All tours include a three-course lunch at Amusé Bistro & transportation. Call for more information 250-743-3667. (*www.amuse-bistro.com*)

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LETTER FROM PARIS

The best restaurant in the city is the author's apartment in the 2nd arrondissement.

Yesterday I took my wife, Carol, out for the "best" steak tartare in Paris—according to Frommer's in the *New York Times*—at the Bar des Thé des Théâtres, a bistro in the 7th arrondissement. Well, it wasn't. Blender-pulverized and barely registering on the flavour meter, it wasn't even in the *100* best. To add injury to insult, my wife came down with a nasty bout of Robespierre's Revenge.

Home for us for the past three months has been a 39-steps-up apartment in a 200-year-old building in the 2nd arrondissement, splendidly located between the Louvre and the Place de L'Opera. Lately, the 2nd has turned into Little Tokyo. Within a few blocks' radius, we have a reputed 100 Japanese restaurants. But we hadn't come to Paris for sushi-sashimi or the slurping of soba noodles in Dolby sound.

We love this city. We love its food. But we don't love its restaurants. At local brasseries, coffee is $10 and up. An American expat who's lived in Paris for the past 25 years tells us that to eat well with wine, we must *start* at 100 euros ($150) per head. This, dear readers, is not our snack bracket.

It's not that we're alien to haughty cuisine: We've eaten at Alain Dutournier's Carré des Feuillants, which has two Michelin stars and now charges 200 euros for a six-course meal sans wine; we don't remember a single bite. Guy Savoy, that twinkling essence of Right Bank chic, has three Michelin stars; we liked it better. But we'd happily trade both for the dinner of *soupe de poissons* and *ris de veau* we ate in a humble *logis* with lumpy beds in Cavaillon too many years ago.

Our neighbourhood isn't much celebrated for its restaurants, although just a short walk away on Rue de Beaujolais, Napoleon wined and dined Josephine at La Grand Vefour. Friends have treated us to the nearby Michelin-recommended Gallopin, but everything that hobbles out of its kitchen is the sort of French that opened our eyes 50 years ago and now closes them all too fast.

Our local fave is Phnom Penh Saigon, a family-run Cambodian *boite* better than anything we've found in Phnom Penh or Siem Reap. Dancing with lemongrass, kaffir lime, sweet basil and red chilies, its fare is racy and authentic. A wee, grey-haired chef toils 18 hours a day six days a week to make her mark on Paris. She doesn't know how good she is.

With the disgraced nouvelle cuisine nowhere in sight, everybody's playing the "*cuisine traditionelle*" card. This translates as menus studded with parts: brains, snouts, necks, livers, tripes, kidneys, hoofs and tails (presumably the *recta* are exported to England for its cooking *traditionelle*).

We're adventurous enough, but we don't take kindly to anything that normally reeks like an outhouse on an August afternoon. Out damned kidneys! Out damned tripes!

And the quest for an honest *frite*? At Gallopin, which touts tradition, they serve chips, not frites. Walking the alleys behind eateries from corner brasseries to gastronomic grails, we peer into the secret heart of Parisian cuisine and see that it's called McCain's *quelle horreur*, the boxes piled up to the ozone.

I tell people the best restaurant in Paris is our apartment. Rental apartments abound in the City of Light. If they earn small fortunes for their owners, they also allow us to eat as the Parisians do, which is very, very well. My beret planted on my head, I venture out for baguette and croissants every morning, humming songs from Hollywood movies set in the City of Light, the ghosts of Gene Kelly, Maurice Chevalier, Cary Grant and Audrey Hepburn on my trail.

The raw materials available to Parisians in ordinary supermarkets at ordinary prices send the foodie ricocheting. At our local Monoprix on Rue de L'Opera, we fill our basket with fresh foie gras, duck breast stuffed with foie gras, duck confit from the Southwest, fresh trout eggs, game birds, amazing cheeses hitherto unknown to us, Champagne and table wines from a defiantly chauvinistic selection of French labels.

Street markets, which spring up regularly across the city, specialize in magnificent domestic product. Scallops from the Marché Ave du Président Wilson are the best I've ever eaten, their fat crescents of coral infused with the essence of the sea. On Rue Cler, Carol snaps up morels and white asparagus in season. The Rue Montorgueil, for pedestrians but never pedestrian, is one of the oldest markets in town, an unfettered delight.

CONT"D AT THE BOTTOM OF PAGE 10

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chef's **talk** — by **Ceara Lornie**

"Do you or any of your kitchen staff have food, drink or kitchen utensil tattoos?"

Mike Weaver - Lure 250.360.5873
I personally don't have any tattoos-- too chicken I think! However most of my kitchen crew do. Probably our most famed tattooee is my Chef de Partie Dan Bain. He has quite a few tattoos but his most prized is his Chinese clever. He can actually chop shallots with it when he flexes his biceps!

Ben Peterson - Heron Rock Bistro 250.383.1545
Chris has a tree on his arm and Joey has a pineapple on his lower back. A former cook had his chef's knife down the length of his forearm. I've also seen a portrait of Julia Child on a co-worker's buttock. I have been toying with different ideas for a long time but as yet am still a blank canvas.

Cory Pelan - La Piola 250.388.4517
Does scarification count? If so, I have numerous scars depicting the outlines of various kitchen tools such as oven racks, oven door edges, pan handles, tong hinges, flash pan rims and an especially nice half moon outline of a crème brulée ramekin on the side of my left index finger.

Patrick Lynch - Foo Asian Street Food 259.383.3111
I have a cook; we call her Bubbles. Bubbles got drunk and inked herself with India ink and a dirty hypodermic. She has a jailhouse style tat that has the word porc with a heart around it on her arm. She says it's the French spelling for the word pork, but we all believe that because she was drunk she spelled it incorrectly. I believe her inspiration for the piece was her love for both swine and French Canadian high-test brew.

Smoken Bones Cookshack - Ken Hueston 250.391.6328
Tattoos seem to show up on 80 percent of all kitchen staff and for years I avoided them. I guess I thought since everyone seems to have one I would stand out more without. And now every time I look in the mirror I am reminded about where I have ended up and how I got there since I have a tattoo of the Smoken Bones Cookshack logo that runs from my left elbow to my shoulder. I am pretty sure I have the only tattoo of this sort. However if anyone wants a Cookshack tattoo I'll buy!

Garrett Schack - Vista 18 250.361.5698
We have several kitchen tattoos in our kitchen, anything from my own version of breakfast in bed to the Hamburglar.

Trish Dixon - Breakers Fresh Food Cafe 250.725.2558
No food or kitchen utensils, but between seven of us we have: one bird, four tribal designs, three suns, one dragon, forty-eight flowers with vines, one dragonfly, thirteen symbols, one lion, eighteen stars, thirteen phrases, one leopard print neck, two portraits, one fairy, three skulls, one microphone and mixer!

Laurie Munn - Cafe Brio 250.383.0009
Sorry, but neither myself nor any of my boys have any food related tattoos. Once you start living in a professional kitchen you rarely have any time for extracurricular activities let only sitting in a tattoo chair. Besides when you are all old and the ink is wrinkled, who wants to have a conversation with their grandkid that goes like this:
"Grandpa did you get that tattoo for being in the army?"
"No Johnny/Sally, Grandpa used to feel strongly about asparagus."

LETTER FROM PARIS

CONT'D FROM PAGE 9

Like Frenchmen themselves, I wake up in the mornings pondering, "And what will I eat tonight?" Well, tonight is our last in Paris. Tonight Carol is giving foie gras the *ssssst-sssst* in the pan. I'm tossing a salad of *mache* sprinkled with toasted pistachios and dressed with garlic, lemon and the last of the olive oil. We have wine, a crisp Ayala Champagne to start. A solid Côtes du Rhône will hook up with the confit, the duck thigh extravagantly preserved in crinolines of its own fat, the skin crackling, the succulent flesh cascading from the bone at the touch of a fork. What a way to say goodbye.

Cold Soups: The Essence of Summer Flavours

Summer is the perfect time for cold soups, refreshing tonics made with seasonal fruits, vegetables and herbs. Uncooked fruit or vegetable purees are the ultimate in effortless summer dishes, ideal for busy cooks with dewy brows. Most cold soups only have a few ingredients and can be prepared in minutes using a food processor.

Cold soups fall into two basic categories: those that are meant to be served cold (e.g. fruit soups) and chilled versions of hot soups (e.g. creamy vegetable soup). The latter group of soups need adjustments to shine as cold soups. Cream, yogurt and sour cream should be used instead of butter or animal fat, which have unappetizing textures when chilled. When preparing spicy Indonesian soups as cold soups, spices must be fine-tuned because chilling mutes tastes and changes the flavour balance.

For best results, use crisp cold produce to make chilled soups. Refrigerate soups for at least three hours or overnight, and serve them chilled, not icy cold, for peak flavour. Pectin causes fruit purees to gel in the refrigerator, so they need to be whisked or twirled in a blender prior to serving. Many soups thicken as they cool and may require the addition of broth, milk, cream or grape juice.

Many cold soups are related to salad and salsa and benefit from the texture of hand-chopped ingredients. Try tangy Bulgarian tarator, made with yoghurt and chopped **garlic**, walnuts, **dill** and **cucumbers**. To create a feast for the eyes and the palate, make one batch of gazpacho with **red tomatoes** and one with **yellow tomatoes**, and ladle them side by side into bowls. Try **cucumber** gazpacho with crab, or **mango**, **red onion** and black bean gazpacho. Pass sour cream and chopped onions, **cucumbers**, **peppers** around the table so everyone can garnish their soup.

Stone fruits (**peaches**, **plums**, **apricots**, **nectarines** and **cherries**) and **berries** make delicious cold soups. A generous splash of wine, Grand Marnier, amaretto or matching fruit brandy intensifies their sweet and astringent tastes. Imagine rosé in a radiant **plum** soup or burgundy in tart **raspberry** soup. Try fruit borscht, made with **plums**, **blueberries**, dry red wine, cinnamon, cloves and sugar, topped with **lemon** slices and sour cream.

Fresh herbs, such as **chives**, **mint**, **cilantro** and **marjoram**, **edible flowers** and other imaginative garnishes enhance the flavour and appearance of chilled soups. Adorn **honeydew lime** soup with a spiral of lime zest and a strip of proscuitto tied around a **melon** slice. Anise-flavoured **chervil**, **basil** and **fennel** pair well with the Mediterranean flavours of **tomatoes** and **garlic**.

Celebrate the bounty of summer with a parade of luscious chilled soups in colours as vibrant as the flowers in your garden. Buttercup yellow **carrot** soup, tea-rose pink Indian **pear** soup, fuchsia **beet** borsht—the possibilities are endless. Each spoonful tastes like the essence of summer.

Spicy Tropical Fruit and Barbecued Chicken Soup

Combine the chicken and fruit for this salsa-like soup just before serving, otherwise the fruit enzymes will make the chicken mushy.
Makes 8 servings

1 small pineapple, peeled, cored and thinly sliced, juice reserved
1 papaya, peeled, seeded and chopped into 1/4 inch cubes
3 kiwis, peeled and thinly sliced

2 mangoes, cut into cubes

3 poblano chilies or 2 red bell peppers, roasted, skinned and seeded
4 jalapeño chilies, seeded and finely chopped
1 cup cilantro leaves, finely chopped
salt and pepper to taste
1/2 cup water

4 whole chicken breasts, split in half
1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil

1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
1 teaspoon chopped fresh marjoram or thyme
1 Walla Walla onion, finely chopped

Place pineapple slices and juice in a large mixing bowl. Add papaya, kiwis and mangoes. Slice roasted peppers into thin strips and combine with fruits. Stir in 3/4 of the chopped jalapeños and 2 tablespoons of cilantro. Season with salt and pepper. Puree 1/4 of the fruit in a blender with the water, add to fruit and refrigerate overnight.

Barbecue chicken breasts until the meat is firm, about 10 minutes per side. Cool slightly, debone and cut into thin strips. Toss with olive oil, vinegar and marjoram. Season with salt and pepper.

Ladle fruit into chilled bowls. Add chicken strips and sprinkle with remaining cilantro. Serve with chopped onions and jalapeños.

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good for **you** — by **Pam Durkin**

SAFE SUMMER GRILLING

A few simple tips for healthy barbecuing.

Now that summer is upon us, foodies everywhere are donning aprons, steaks in hand, ready to hit the backyard barbecue. If you regularly partake in this annual stampede, there are a few things you need to consider, from a health standpoint, before firing up the grill. Why? When red meat, as well as chicken and fish, are grilled, they release polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons as well as heterocyclic amines (HCAs)—compounds that are known carcinogens. Does this mean barbecuing is a big NO? Absolutely not—below are some tips you can implement to make your barbecuing safe *and* tasty.

1. Think of alternatives. Most health experts encourage moderation when it comes to meat consumption, regardless of the cooking method. So why not throw something other than red meat on the barbie? Studies show significantly lower levels of HCAs and other harmful compounds are produced when alternate protein sources like chicken and fish are grilled.

2. Marinate! Researchers have found that meat that has been marinated before grilling forms as much as 90 percent fewer HCAs than non-marinated meat cooked the same way. Marinades that contained beer, wine and acidic liquids like balsamic vinegar or citrus juice were found to be the most effective in reducing HCAs. And there's another good reason to marinate. According to a study conducted at the University of Western Ontario, using marinades before grilling adds antioxidant power to your meals. The researchers tested seven different brands of commercial marinades and found they contained a significant amount of antioxidants. Since heating meat to a high temperature destroys as much as 70 percent of the antioxidants, experts recommend brushing on an additional layer of marinade *after* cooking. This simple step will enhance both the nutritional value and the flavour of everything you grill.

3. Reduce dripping. Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons are formed when fat drips from meat and comes into contact with coal and other hot objects. The ensuing flare-ups leave these nasty chemicals deposited on your meat. This effect can be reduced significantly by choosing leaner cuts of beef for barbecuing. Tenderloin, eye of round, top round and game meats like bison are your best bets. In addition, using tongs to turn your meat instead of piercing it with a fork, not placing meat directly over coals and having a spray bottle nearby to contain flare-ups are other ways to reduce dripping.

4. Microwave briefly. Surprisingly, spending a brief period in the microwave seems to protect meat in much the same way as marinating does. Scientists have found that microwaving meat two minutes before placing it on the grill causes the final concentration of HCAs to be reduced by as much as 90 percent.

5. Flip frequently. Get ready to do "Barbecue Aerobics." A recent study found that flipping your meat frequently accelerates the cooking process, helps prevent the formation of HCAs and helps kill bacteria like E. coli.

6. Be clean. You marinated, you didn't pierce your meat but used tongs instead, and you flipped the meat frequently. Now the meal has been eaten, your protective work is done, right? Nope. One of the most important things you can do to ensure safe barbecuing is to clean your grill thoroughly. Residues left on the grill often contain high levels of HCAs, and these unwanted guests will remain on your grill unless you clean it thoroughly. Scrape all burned bits off the grates, even if you have to use a paint scraper.

Here's an antioxidant-rich marinade for you to try courtesy of David Roger, executive chef at the Marriott Victoria Inner Harbour.

500 mL local amber ale
4 Tbsp Kikkoman soy sauce
2 Tbsp brown sugar
2 Tbsp fireweed honey
4 cloves fresh roasted garlic, minced
1 Tbsp minced fresh ginger
2 Tbsp Dijon mustard
1 orange (zest, then cut in half and squeeze into marinade; add zest to marinade as well)
2 sprigs fresh rosemary
2 sprigs fresh thyme
1 tsp cracked black peppercorns
Dash salt
Extra sprigs of rosemary and thyme for garnishing platter

Whisk marinade ingredients in a bowl. Place marinade, along with the squeezed orange halves, into a food-grade plastic bag.
Place pork tenderloin or your favoured steak into marinade bag and seal. Place in refrigerator for a minimum of 12 hours (overnight for best absorption).
Turn barbecue onto high heat.
Remove meat from marinade bag (set marinade aside for basting) and sear all sides, then turn down the barbecue to low heat.
Slow-cook the meat, flipping the pieces frequently and basting often with the marinade until done (should be served medium-rare).
Discard used marinade; do not serve as a sauce with the meat.

PICKLE POWER

Forget chocolate, says Julie Pegg. A crisp, crunchy, sour pickle makes this girl real sweet.

I lack a sweet tooth. The mere thought of a sugary square or frosted cake sets my molars on edge. This sour puss is fond of racy wines, will put a squirt of citrus on just about anything, and considers a crunchy pickle to be the perfect marriage of cucumber and vinegar. If I'm blue, chocolate does little to assuage me. A little pucker power, on the other hand, comforts me no end. Give me a chunky kosher dill. Slather my rye bread with mustard, and sour makes this girl real sweet.

The custom of pickling can be traced back through the millennia. It's believed that during the building of the Great Wall, pickled vegetables sustained Chinese labourers. In fact, pickling has seeped into most cultures, salt and vinegar being ideal food keepers. Canada's immigrants brought pickle recipes from "home," and cukes grow easily in our country. Polish and Russian immigrants gave us garlic dills, the French contributed the tiny cornichons or gherkins, which are in the cucumber family but are a different cultivar. When dining at L'Express in Montreal, I have to slip out of the place immediately the cheque is settled. The full jar of very good cornichons that was set before me when I sat down will, embarrassingly, be in need of a fill-up.) The English are responsible for introducing sweet/sour brown pickle. Better known commercially as "Branston Pickle," this medley of brined vegetables, including gherkins, is a marvel with cheddar or blue cheese. I can hussle up a ploughman's lunch *tout de suite* with little more than crusty bread and a good brew.

Bread-and-butter pickles represent pure Canadiana to me. Shortly after emigrating from England, our family lived down the road from the Powells. Mr. Powell had been a third-generation Ontario farmer. Mrs. Powell made everything from scratch and preserved every fruit and vegetable imaginable. I'd pop by for her egg salad on fluffy homemade bread, accompanied by thin sweet/sour slices and a handful of potato chips. Another winner was her mustard pickle, to which was added chunks of cauliflower and onion and served as a side dish for cold roast beef.

Recently I spied a special issue of *Canadian Living* called "Grow It, Eat It," at the pharmacy checkout. A quick leaf through revealed my favourite pickle recipes, including the one for English brown pickle. Methods were simple and succinctly laid out. (Recipes are also available online at *www.canadianliving.com/food*). Stumbling on a mustard pickle recipe proved a little trickier. Cooks.com offers a couple of good recipes. Not surprisingly so does the *Joy of Cooking*, although I prefer to omit the beans, peppers and carrots that the recipe calls for.

Forget plucking pickles from the grocers' shelves. With the season's plethora of cukes (and other veggies) and the ever-increasing focus on raising and/or eating fresh and local, you can easily put up a few jars. And the added bonus? There are far fewer calories in pickles than pies. Get crunching.

Making pickles is easy. However, there are important pointers for getting your pickles crisp, bright and brimming with briny flavour. The following tips are adapted from *Stocking Up: How to Preserve the Foods You Grow* (Rodale Press 1977, compiled by the staff of *Organic Farming and Gardening*).

PICKLE TIPS

• Try to find spiny pickling cucumbers—look for "Kirby" or "Liberty." Cukes should be in prime shape—no soft spots or bruises. Use within 24 hours of picking. Refrigerate until use.

• Commercial white distilled vinegar has the necessary 4-6 percent acetic acid required for brining and will not discolour white vegetables such as cauliflower and onions.

• Filtered or chemical free water is recommended. Chemically treated water can darken pickles and interfere with fermentation.

• Use kosher, pickling or rock salt. Iodized salt may darken pickles or cause the brine to cloud.

• Use fresh, whole spices or herbs. Blanch garlic for two minutes, if using, or remove before sealing jars.

• Heat pickling liquid in a non-reactive pot. Use crock, stone or mason jars for fermenting pickles.

• Taste the liquid before canning to ensure the seasoning is balanced and to your liking.

Note: The third edition of *Stocking Up* (1986) is available through *Amazon.com*. It has added seed charts with suitable vegetable varieties for canning and freezing. It is *the* bible for any gardener, preserver and cook, whether amateur or professional.

EAT ONLINE

If our writers seem exuberant it's because they are passionate about BC food

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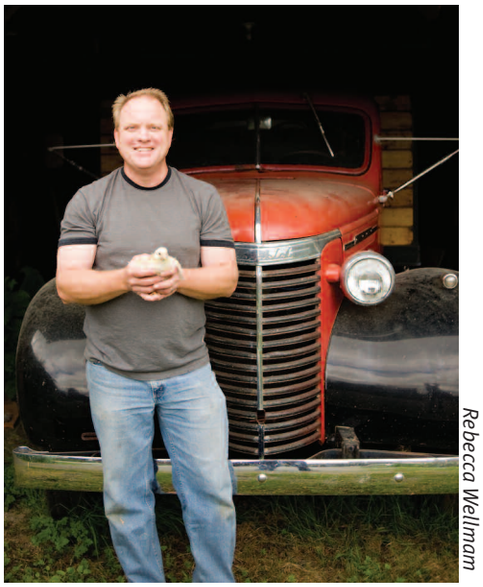
LYLE YOUNG of Cowichan Bay Farm



Rebecca Wellman

According to Lyle Young, "Local is the new organic."

A fourth-generation farmer and owner-operator of the Island Farmhouse Poultry chicken processing facility, Lyle is in the know. He spends his days encouraging poultry producers to raise birds, lobbying governments for recognition of Vancouver Island's unique local food needs, and running the processing plant that handles both his farm's pasture-raised chickens and Island-raised commercially grown chickens from more than 350 farms. "I like to keep busy," he says. It's a laughable understatement.

Lyle's wife, Fiona Young, is an integral part of the farm—and has been for the past 23 years. Now she's doing more farming than he is, and they both have full-time jobs outside the farm.

The processing plant is in its fifth year of operation, and while they have reached a state of profitability, the first three to four years were difficult times. Beside Lyle's desk, which he calls "a snowstorm of papers," the wall is covered in sticky notes. One reads, "Remember that happiness is a way of travel, not a destination." This reminds him to focus on the positive aspects of the journey, even when the journey is difficult. Lyle's optimistic spirit, as well as several levels of support, helped carry the family through those tough years. "The chefs' community has just been fantastic to us, especially Mara Jernigan," Lyle says. He also credits his solid staff, Island producers, grocers and other businesses that sustain and promote local food. Living and working in North America's first "*Città Slow*" or Slow City region helps too. It may be something in the soil or in the water that draws local food types to the Cowichan Valley. "I think it's in the wine, actually," he laughs.

Lyle relaxes and recharges by taking kayaking trips and overland journeys. At home he enjoys working on vintage vehicles. Right now he's rebuilding a 1927 Model T Speedster, his first time building from parts rather than taking a car apart and rebuilding it. "It's like solving a puzzle."

This puzzle-solving and improving how things function translates into his work on the farm and the plant each day. Currently he is redesigning the irrigation system for greater efficiency. Last year the enhancements resulted in flavour changes in the meat, especially the lamb, that were "out of this world." Ever-striving for improvement, Lyle is balancing the variables involved to improve it even further.

This philosophy and standard of excellence has brought recognition from the BC SPCA with their *Farmer of the Year Award 2002* and the *BC Heritage Society's Recognition Certificate* in 2004. As well, Island Farmhouse Poultry was a finalist in the *Food and Beverage Production Category Award* from MISTIC (Mid-Island Science, Technology and Innovation Council) in 2008.

And Cowichan Bay Farm will soon be recognized as a Century Farm. According to the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands website, the award is "designed to honour pioneers whose farm or ranch has been in the family for over 100 years," an increasingly rare phenomenon these days and one worth celebrating. "I feel very privileged to be on the farm and have an opportunity to do something with it," says Lyle. Hanging on another office wall, Lyle has two enlarged photographs. One is of his great-grandfather sporting a cougar over his neck and the other is of his grandmother standing beside a Jersey cow carrying three children—Lyle's mother, uncle and aunt.

The family tradition informs his philosophy while at the same time Lyle remains practical. "I come from a small farm background and that's where my heart is. With good ideas, hard work and the right support, farming can be a very satisfying way of making a living. The opportunity is there, but you've got to be different and offer what people want." Fortunately for Vancouver Island chicken farmers and consumers, Lyle's perseverance, optimism and practicality are reaping tasty rewards.

farmers market — by **Candice Shultz**

HEIRLOOM BEANS

Fresh alternatives to the traditional green bean.

When shopping at markets and farm stands this season, it might seem easier to reach for the oh-so-familiar green bean. Before you do, though, consider that Vancouver Island growers offer a wide variety of colourful legumes that can make a refreshing addition to any meal.

Beans are one of the oldest cultivated plants on earth. A domesticated variety has been grown in Thailand since the early seventh millennium BC, and beans have been found in the ancient pyramid tombs of Egypt. Easy to grow and quite indestructible if dried and stored properly, beans have provided insurance against famine and an important source of protein and meat alternative throughout the history of agriculture.

Although beans are grown extensively for the ripened fruit inside their pods, eating the crisp, tender green pods is a summer treat. Here on Vancouver Island, pole beans such as the scarlet runner, are a tasty choice. As these fast-growing vines grow upwards, the pods mature at different rates so growers can continuously pick what's perfectly ripe. The growing season for pole beans is about double that of a bush bean, which tends to produce all at once for a short period of time.

One of the most common (of the less common) varieties, the scarlet runner bean grows particularly well on Vancouver Island. Interestingly, some grow this legume for its beautiful blooms, which are edible and have a subtle bean flavour. The typically bright orange blossoms make them an attractive addition to any garden. Scarlet runners are also great pollinators, attracting hummingbirds and other insects.

This long, broad and hearty bean must be picked and eaten when young and fresh. Otherwise, the texture of the pod becomes tough and fibrous and can be off-putting. Inside the pod, the beans are generally mottled purple and black. They can be prepared with or without the pod. However, keep in mind that scarlet runners should be cooked thoroughly before you chow down. They contain traces of a sugar-binding protein called lectin, which can be harmful if consumed in high amounts.

The purple peacock pole bean, similar to the scarlet runner in size and shape, is also an attractive addition to any garden or meal. Its deep purple pods turn green when cooked. This variety is less common among growers because it cross-pollinates with other varieties, making the purple peacock a better choice for personal gardens. Scarlet runners are the purple peacock's favourite cross-pollinating partner, resulting in beans that are mottled purple and green.

The royal burgundy variety, also vibrantly purple in colour, is a bush bean similar in size and shape to a green bean. Like the purple peacock, the royal burgundy's pod magically turns green when cooked. Buttery and flavourful, look for these beans at the market when they are young and the pod still soft.

Gary Hynes

Royal Burgundy beans at Moss Street Market

French filet beans (haricot vert) also grow well locally. Available in either green or yellow, filet beans are thinner, more delicate than traditional green beans and complement lighter dishes. They hold their shape nicely when cooked and are one of the tenderest varieties, making them generally preferred among chefs.

You'll also find romano beans at farm stands and markets this summer. They make a fantastic addition to Italian or Greek-inspired meals. These hearty flat beans can be eaten whole or shelled.

When the supply of fresh beans runs out at the end of the season, look for orca beans, also known as calypso or yin yang beans. Orca beans are an heirloom variety whose black and white patches make them look remarkably like their namesake. The seeds are generally sold dried at the end of the season, allowing the orca bean to showcase its most visually attractive qualities without its green pod. When cooked, orca beans are creamy and delicious. They make a great addition to soups or are tasty sautéed on their own.

Fresh local beans are available from late July through August, although greenhouse varieties can be found as early as the beginning of July. As with any other ingredient, eating beans locally and seasonally is key to the best tasting meals. Imported beans tend to be tougher and more fibrous, lacking the freshness of a bean that was on the vine just hours ago.

This season, look for these market favourites while tender, juicy and just-picked. There are an overwhelming variety of beans available, grown just beyond (or within) your backyard and worth a try. Take a break from the traditional green bean and add a new type of bean to your repertoire.

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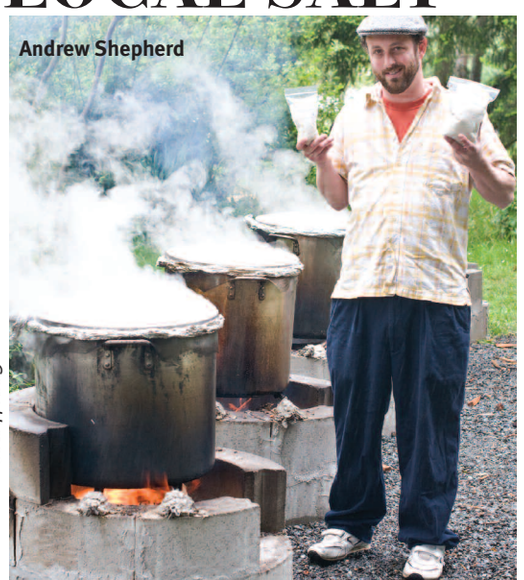
artisan foods — by Gary Hynes

LOCAL SALT



Andrew Shepherd

Gary Hynes

Residents of Cherry Point in the Cowichan Valley can be forgiven for their curiosity when they spy Andrew Shepherd wading into the ocean in the dark, wee hours of the night wearing a headlamp, filling pails with sea water and carrying them back to the trunk of his car. But every weekend this former chef gets up in the middle of the night to follow the tides–specifically high tides. For that's when the inshore waters are their purest and least disturbed with sediment. Shepherd is harvesting sea salt - actually buckets and buckets of sea water which he takes back to his nearby home and fills three large commercial cooking stock pots with these buckets of water to be boiled down over wood fires until evaporated and a fine layer of flaky, crystals of sea salt is left at the bottom.

Natural, hand-harvested, unrefined artisan sea salt is completely different in nutritional quality and taste than industrial refined salt. It contains a high mineral content, is milder (with less sodium chloride) and doesn't have that intense burn at the back of your throat of refined salt. People will pay good money for a top quality, hand-harvested sea salt which comes in a surprising varieties of flavours and colours. I keep at least three sea salts in my cupboard which I use as a finishing salt - sprinkling a little on a tomato salad, a grilled steak or steamed vegetables to bring out extra flavour. Among my current favourites are *Sel Gris* or *Fleur de Sel*, which is harvested off the northern coast of France in Brittany with its light grey colour (a result of the clay and minerals) and slightly damp texture and Himalyan Pink, a crunchy, full-flavoured salt which comes from ancient seas that dried up more than 200 million years ago.

As we stand around watching the boiling pots which Shepherd frequently tops up, he explains how he got into salt. "Every sea salt from around the world has a distinctive flavour so why not here, too? There's a unique flavour to the salt harvest on the eastern side of Vancouver Island and its changes seasonally. During the rainy season the salt is darker while in the drought of the summer the salt is bone white – almost looks bleached. Our salt is very mild and has a delicate texture. It is also less saline than other salts - a unique terroir. I would imagine salt coming from Tofino would be different."

Shepherd's business is called the **Vancouver Island Salt Company** (www.visaltco.com). "I want people know this is a small west coast style business and they can call me up anytime. I'm the guy that answers the phone" Shepherd's salt is being snatched up by Island chefs eager to be able to serve high quality, naturallly-harvested salt that is local. And, I now have a new favourite sea salt up on my shelf.

Purchases can be made through the website or by phone at 250-882-4489. A half pound bag is $4.50.

A MOVEABLE FEAST

Dining under the radar in Vancouver: dining at an underground restaurant.

— by **Sandra McKenzie**

Inside 12B

Tracey Kusiewicz

Up the steep stairs and down the dark corridor, Chef Todd slouches comfortably against the doorway to 12B, a private supper club open only to the select few who can find it. There's no canopy advertising 12B's presence in the nondescript walkup in a light industrial neighbourhood in Vancouver's east side. No chalkboard advertises the day's bill of fare to passersby. In fact, Todd's presence and his spoken welcome are the only clear signs that you even have the right address. There's something very Anthony Bourdain about all of this, you think. The impression is only heightened when the chef announces that smoking is not only allowed but mandatory in his small fiefdom.

The "smoking is mandatory" stuff is less a demand than a sardonic commentary, part invitation, part warning. This is not only Chef Todd's business venture, it's also his home, and the single room that is not given over to preparing and serving food is his private sanctuary, office and smoking lounge where he does indeed indulge his habit and invites guests to do the same.

Except for the very professional kitchen, with stainless steel counters and prep area, commercial range, and an array of simple white plates and bowls, the flat is bright and airy, long on edgy artwork and refreshingly short on clutter. The dining room is simply furnished with massive cedar slabs that serve as table and seating. There is a small table where guests can deposit their wine, and a shelf full of Mason jars that serve in lieu of stemware.

There will be ten of us for dinner on this particular night. Though I've arranged the party, most of us don't know each other except through a common friend who is absent. None of us have ever been to 12B before, and we don't really know what to expect, except for what we've read in a few local food blogs and a newspaper review or two. We do know that discretion is necessary. No loud and rowdy behaviour, please—the neighbours are cool, but they do have their limits. We can photograph the food if we like, but please, no pictures of the street scene outside, and absolutely no shots of the chef above neck level.

This is an underground restaurant, operating somewhere in the twilight zone of legality. Every major city boasts at least a few maverick chefs who opt out of the whole risky, expensive process of opening a restaurant in favour of serving ad hoc dinners to small groups in locales that may or may not meet prevailing fire codes, but almost certainly do not have disabled-access washrooms.

Beyond their precarious legality, about all these restaurants have in common is that everything from the menu to the venue is going to be a mystery. You make the date for dinner and wait for an email or a text message telling you where and when. The menu is strictly chef's choice, though typically he or she will take into account any allergies or serious aversions. And don't ask for a wine list—there won't be one. These places are almost universally BYOB, though the chef may suggest some pairings. The location might be a walk-up flat in a dodgy neighbourhood, or it might be a funky east-side heritage house. The only element known in advance is the price, or, in underground restaurant parlance, the "minimum donation."

At 12B, Chef Todd caters to private dinner parties, usually organized by the person who makes the booking. He can accommodate a maximum of twelve guests, and requires a minimum of six, for a suggested donation of $65 a head, not including gratuity. Plus, you bring your own wine. That's not cheap eats, but the price does compare favourably with high-end restaurants around the city. If the food compares too, then it is a fair bargain. At least here you're paying for the food and labour, as opposed to subsidizing west-side rents and chi-chi decor.

And Chef Todd works hard for his pay. Each dinner party is a unique event with a unique menu. He estimates that it takes about 24 man-hours a day to pull this off. (He does have an assistant helping him during the day, though Chef Todd himself

cooks, plates, serves and washes up afterwards.) He does this six nights a week for groups of six to twelve guests, and has done so for about two and a half years. Since there's no walk-in trade, and nobody ends up at 12B by mistake, if a party should fall through at the last minute, he's out the full cost. Fortunately, he says, that's rare. "I follow up on reservations, and if someone bails with less than a week's notice, I ask for a $200 donation. Stuff happens, and I just try to salvage the situation if I can."

By 8:00 p.m., the chef's preferred start time, all of the evening's guests are assembled. For half-an-hour or so we chat, examine the artwork on the walls, share wine and wait, with stomachs grumbling audibly. Finally, shortly after 8:30, the first course arrives, introduced with a perfunctory description from the chef. And it is indeed worth waiting for: tomato saffron soup, with a perfect disk of crab cake, topped with a sweet, delicate bite of crab claw. The next course, a deconstructed salad niçoise, is composed of a perfectly seared nugget of tuna topped with a quail egg, surrounded by tiny, jewel-like roasted potatoes, and culminating in a ball of goat cheese studded with chives.

By this time we know we are in the hands of a culinary professional blessed with an artist's eye. Next comes a leg of Cornish game hen stuffed with rabbit and spinach, followed by duck breast served with forbidden rice. The highlight is a grilled bison tenderloin with a fig balsamic demi-glace. The dinner culminates with a chocolate-cherry ganache, star anise ice cream and a rhubarb compote.

deconstructed salad niçoise

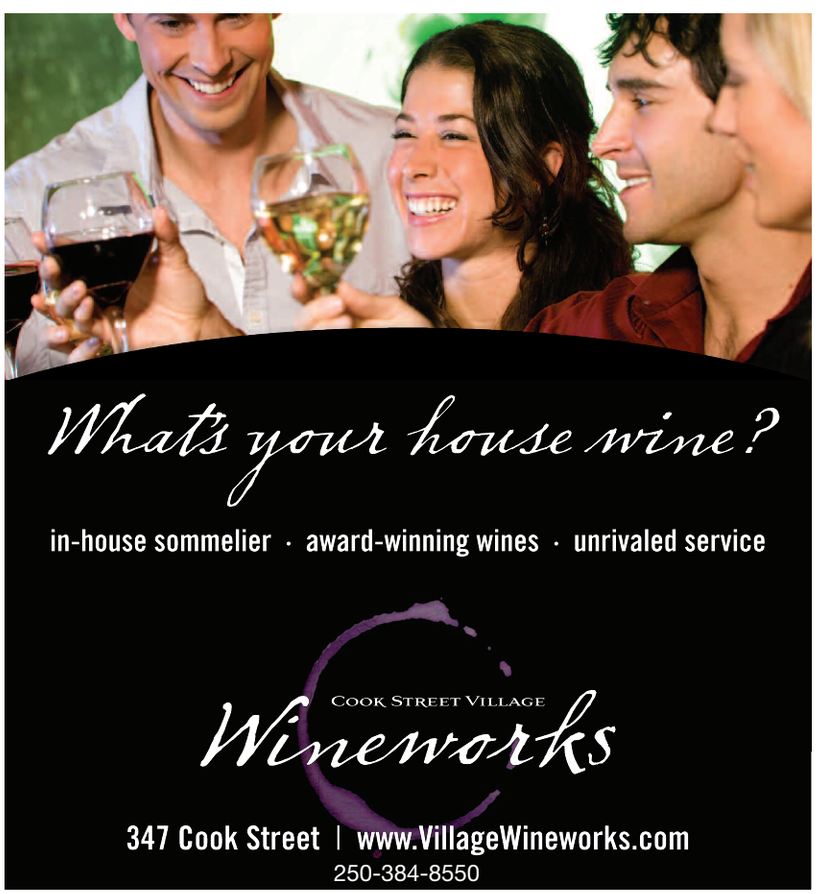
Tracey Kusiewicz

I think I can safely say that, in our group at least, we have all paid far more for far less in some of Vancouver's better-known hot spots. One guest, a New Yorker whose epicurean proclivities have led him to many of that city's most-renowned restaurants, compared Chef Todd's efforts very favourably to the tasting menu at chef Tom Colicchio's Craft, or Ignacio Mattos' Il Buco in NYC. One small quibble from another guest was that the food could have been hotter, but, as she notes, "better warm than overdone." That said, when the party broke up shortly before 11 (it was, after all, a weeknight), we were all very happily stuffed and feeling very much like our money and time had been well spent. The next day we exchanged a flurry of emails, making tentative plans to repeat the experience, sooner rather than later.

OK, so maybe it's a little precious to think of these semi-legit enterprises as acts of rebellion. It's not like anyone is facing hard time for serving bootleg bison; there's no serious likelihood that doors will be kicked in and patrons frogmarched out to the paddy wagon. Still, there is more than a touch of paranoia attached to the cloak-and-dagger rituals of booking a dinner at, say, 12B or NFA (the initials stand for No Fixed Address), two of Vancouver's better-known examples of the genre. Local health authorities and other regulatory agencies frown on these ventures. As for the chefs involved, getting busted is a real, and potentially ruinous, danger. For that reason, I can't tell you where 12B is or go into Chef Todd's background, except to say that he is a genuine chef and has 20 years' experience at every level in a professional kitchen. I wish I could. You can, however, contact him at *12breservations@gmail.com*. For more about other alternative restaurants in Vancouver or elsewhere, Google is your friend.

There's a lot to like about underground restaurants. There's the sheer fun of mixing a unique culinary experience with a few like-minded folk. There's the element of surprise that blends well with an expectation of excellence. There's the possibility of discovering the next hot chef, or being in on an emerging trend before it declines into cliché. But for my money, the best reason is the sense of adventure that underscores the evening. Adrenalin is a great appetizer.

**Disclosure:* I identified myself to Chef Todd as a writer researching an article in my first contact with him. Though I describe the dinner, and share opinions, both mine and others, I am not undertaking a critique of the food.



EATING WELL FOR LESS — by **Elizabeth Smyth**

Rebecca Wellman

SEN ZUSHI *left:* **Special Kappa Maki: smoked salmon, cooked egg, avocado, flying fish roe, daikon sprouts and crab rolled in cucumber.** *right:* **Grilled squid.**

Sen Zushi | 940 Fort St near Vancouver St | 250.385.4320

Well, if the members of the Japanese Consulate in Vancouver eat here when they're in town, I think I'm at the right place for authentic Japanese food. Sen Zushi's menu is lengthy and exotic – how to choose from offerings of wasabi-flavoured octopus, a whole sea eel tempura, grilled sundried whole mackerel...it's clear that this is the place to come to get something a little different from regular fare sushi. I narrowed my search down to both budget choices, a given in this column, and ones with some flair beyond, say, a basic salmon roll. The grilled octopus for $9.95 is dramatic and sophisticated. Toothsome rings of pearly-white octopus are seared a coppery gold and displayed on a rectangular plate with the tentacles beautifully arrayed at the end of the plate like a wispy treetop. The Special Kappa Maki for $11.95 is an architectural masterpiece. This roll does not have rice or seaweed. It is held together by gossamer-thin long slices of cucumber, wrapped around smoked salmon, delicate cubes of omelette, flying fish roe, daikon sprouts, and crab. It looks and tastes as if fairies made it. For goodness sake, please don't insult the chef by dunking it in soya sauce; Japanese people pour only a teaspoon of soy sauce into the dipping bowl, and use it very sparingly. My server beseeched me to add the teriyaki chicken to my list of unique dishes Sen Zushi has to offer, vowing that their housemade sauce is special. It is indeed the best I have had, thanks to a secret ingredient the restaurant refuses to divulge. My guess is maple syrup, and a friend's guess is a touch of rice vinegar. I would welcome your guesses via eatmagazine.ca. This dish is a very reasonable $7.95, and Sen Zushi will add rice, soup, and salad to any dish you order for $3. There's plenty on the menu for children to enjoy, and the stainless steel Pokemon forks and knives are very impressive to the junior crowd; also, there's plenty of floor space to park a stroller at the end of most tables. Great place for a quick family meal at 5:00, or for lingering for the evening.

Rebecca Wellman

Ayo Indonesian Food. Owner Bana Syah

Ayo Indonesian Food | 140-560 Johnson St, Market Square | 250.490.4231

At last, an Indonesian restaurant in Victoria. What Ayo restaurant in Market Square lacks in size, it makes up for in flavor. Tucked into the northwest corner inside Market Square is a booth, a kitchen, a cupboard even, where Ali Syahbana (Bana) serves up a few select and authentic dishes using his grandmother's recipes from the North Sumatra region. Most intricate of these is the Masi Campur Rendang, a beef curry dish so special that it is traditional wedding fare. Shallots, garlic, galangal, lemon grass, ginger, cardamom, kaffir lime, cloves and cinnamon stick are just some of the 17 spices in this complex curry. I found myself eating it very slowly as different flavours emerged as I enjoyed each bite. While this dish is rich, the Green Curry with Chicken is surprisingly light and delicate, and attractive with its inclusion of red peppers, green beans, and bamboo shoots. A very pleasant surprise is the Nasi, Goreng Ayam, otherwise known as chicken fried rice. I've had too much lazy fried rice involving soy sauce dumped on rice, so I had to overcome some cynicism. Bana's fried rice, is, however, carefully prepared, and is a tasty mix of shallots, garlic, shrimp paste, and green onions. The Satay Ayam appetizer is grilled chicken on skewers slathered in a rich peanut sauce. This is handy if your child is not a curry fan, and Bana graciously and of his own initiative brought my daughter out a small bowl of rice to accompany the chicken and make it a meal. These little courtesies go far with me. Every single dish at Ayo is under $10. Now, be warned – if you eat at Ayo, you're eating picnic style; there is just one small table and three chairs outside the booth that is Ayo, but there are plenty more benches and steps to sit on in Market Square. The food is served in take-out boxes, so the city is your landscape when it comes to seating.your girlfriends, for a relaxing lunch or early dinner.

The Bard and Banker | 1022 Government St at Fort | 250.953.9993

Half price appetizers! I'm in! Between 3:00 and 6:00 Sunday to Thursday, The Bard and Banker halves the price on nine or so starters, and you can definitely cobble together a meal from them. Try this: fries end up being $3.50, and they come with a fantastic miso, lime, and ginger mayonnaise – you can definitely taste the sophisticated touch of chef Richard Luttman, formerly of the Rosemeade. Beer-battered oyster bites with wasabi aioli end up being $5 for a generous mound – I counted fifteen oysters in the basket. Those two alone make $8.50 for a meal. And raw oysters work out to $6 for six at this time of day. Despite the distracting qualities of oysters, do not leave

CONT'D ON THE NEXT PAGE

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Rebecca Wellman

Bard and Banker
left: **6oz certified angus beef burger with caramelized and fresh onions, cheese, bacon.**
right: **Crispy house smoked pulled pork balls with fontina cheese and BBQ sauce, served with chipotle sour cream dip.**

without trying the crispy smoked pulled pork balls with chipotle barbeque sauce. These are my newest obsession: soft, silky, and smoky pork is encased in a crunchy bread coating and then dipped in a piquant chipotle barbecue sauce that accents but does not overpower the smokiness. And brand, brand new at the Bard is lunch specials for $9.99; as a bonus, the specials on Monday and Wednesday actually run all day. Monday's is a juicy 6-oz beef burger with generous toppings - onions done two ways – carmelized and raw – as well as bacon, aged cheddar, and a mayonnaise-based sauce. This is served with fries, making a very filling meal. Wednesdays are pizza and a pint day. The pizza is a ten-inch one with an airy, thin crust, complex and spicy pepperoni , and shavings of basil – in other words, a notch above your average pub pizza. Even a connoisseur of expensive fine wines can find a way to cut costs at the Bard and Banker. They have a fancy contraption called an enomatic, the only one on Vancouver Island, that vacuums out the oxygen of bottles of wine, meaning a fine bottle of wine can be sold by the glass. For $9, say, you can try a wine that would otherwise be over $100. The Bard and Banker has something for everyone.

Country Organic Ice Cream Outing

Imagine wandering through a farm on a hot summer day, with bees buzzing, chickens clucking in a distant coop, the scent of lavender in the air. Now imagine wandering down a bucolic country path and finding an ice cream shop at the end of it. Pure, old-fashioned ice cream made from Avalon Dairy organic milk – no gums, no modified milk ingredients, no eggs even. The ingredients are mostly from the farm just a few feet away. The fresh scent of crushed mint reaches me even before my chocolate chip mint ice cream cone arrives. The ice cream is creamy white with just a hint of green, and the mint flavour is light and bright. The chocolate ice cream, created from chocolate made on site, is like having a cool chocolate truffle melt in your mouth. And the rose cardamom pistachio is elegant. The base flavour is cream, with a top note of watered distillate of rose petal, and then a sprinkling of pistachio for a crunchy, candied finish. These scoops are served in cookie-like waffle cones made from scratch with eggs from the farm and a hint of orange from orange essential oil.

Organic Fair in Cobble Hill makes handcrafted, artisan products that are organic, fair trade and biodynamic. The store and farm are not too far from Merridale Cidery. I see a lunch at Merridale followed by an exploration of Organic Fair as a perfect summer afternoon outing. *—Elizabeth Smyth*

Organic Fair, 1935 Doran Rd., Cobble Hill, www.organicfair.com
Monday to Saturday 10 to 5, and Sunday 11 to 5.

On the Hunt for Organic Meat

What's in a Name? Making sense of the labels while on the hunt for sustainable meat.

By Rebecca Baugniet

Geoff Martin at Slaters First Class Meat with local Metchosin lamb

Gen Laplante

Last fall *EAT* conducted a poll through our *Tapas* newsletter, asking our subscribers whether they favoured local or organic products when they were food shopping. The response was clear: most readers look first for local *and* organic, but given the choice between imported organic product or a local non-organic product, they would choose local. This shift in consumer trends has been noticed by supermarkets and the larger food corporations as well. Take Thrifty's "We buy B.C first" banners and Hellmann's recent campaign boasting that "every jar starts with 100 percent Canadian free-run eggs" as an example of big business joining the local food movement. So when we received a reader request to investigate the availability of organic meat in Victoria, we thought we'd take the opportunity to examine not just organic meat but other sources of locally sourced sustainable meat as well.

In a talk on developing a sustainable food system given at the University of California, Berkeley in May 2009, Michael Pollan, bestselling author of *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, makes reference to a passage from Confucius. Before you can begin to make progress, said the ancient Chinese philosopher, you need a process he termed the "rectification of the names." This seems a fitting process to undertake given the variety of designations we see on meat packaging. In the sidebar at on page 24), I've compiled a glossary of some of those labels to help in understanding what precisely we are being sold when we buy packaged meat.

The main observation I made as I was visiting butchers and specialty stores around Victoria is that the availability of B.C. certified organic meats is still fairly limited. The widest variety is found at Planet Organic, which carries a large number of vacuum- packed meats under the label Wild! Suppliers of Certified Organic Meats, Game Meats and Specialty Meats. Wild! is the name used by Hills Foods Ltd., a quality meat supplier based in Coquitlam. Planet Organic carries the company's buffalo steak, ground beef, Mennonite turkey sausage, venison sausage and burgers, and even their wild harvest Australian kangaroo burgers.

Also on offer at Planet Organic were Maple Hill Farm chickens, Mclean Organic Foods' deli slices, including salami and sliced turkey, Cedar Creek Organic Frankfurters and Woodstown Farms Ham. Woodstown Farms is part of the Wellshire Farm family, based in New Jersey. While they are not certified organic, they are labelled "all natural," meaning they are produced free from artificial products and preservatives and use minimal processing. In the U.S., the "all natural" label is subject to inspection by a third-party auditor, which makes its quality comparable to a Canadian organic certification.

Lifestyles Markets also carries Hills products. Although not all their selections are certified organic, Lifestyles has a policy of carrying only unmedicated meats. This is one of the requirements local butchers also seek out when supplying their shops. "Organic is not the most important thing for us," explains Geoff Martin, one of the owners of Slater's First Class Meats on Cadboro Bay Road in Oak Bay. Slater's does carry certified organic turkey burgers and chicken wieners. However, Martin stresses that "we are looking for free-range, antibiotic-free and hormone-free first, and all our lamb, pork and poultry meet those standards. We want animals that lived a happy life, out in the field, the way they were supposed to."

Martin also explained that to qualify for organic certification can be a

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At Choux Choux Charcuterie

left: **Terrine made from Cowicahn Valley rabiit**

below: **A selection of charcuterie made from local meats**

Gen Laplante

very expensive undertaking, especially prohibitive for smaller local farms—the very ones they are trying to support. Slater's carries mostly Vancouver Island raised meats, as does the newly opened Island Meat and Seafood on Cook Street. Steve Walker, the butcher who opened the shop last March, told me it was hard to meet the demand for beef with only island-raised meat and was still getting Alberta beef, but he is on the waiting list for sides of beef from Courtney. He does carry Thomas Reid B.C. certified organic chickens from Langley, in addition to Farmhouse Poultry (the only provincially inspected poultry plant on Vancouver Island) and chicken from Cowichan Bay Farms (pasture-raised poultry that are antibiotic and animal byproduct free). The local organic delivery food programs also offer certified organic frozen meats and poultry as well as local natural or unmedicated meats and poultry. Spud! carries Karin's Country organic sausages, Thomas Reid chicken, Pemberton Meadows natural beef and Two Rivers pork from the Fraser Valley. Share carries Cowichan Bay poultry, Empire Valley beef, Fir Hill Farm lamb and Island Bison Ranch bison.

Other good options for finding local, free-range, unmedicated meats include Ambrosio Markets and Delis, which carries Kildonan Farm chickens and Chemainus Sausage. The Niagara Grocery in James Bay also carries a daily selection of meats from Slater's as well as Galloping Goose sausage. The Red Barn at Mattick's Farm in Saanich, The Village Butcher in Oak Bay, Orr and Son's Butchers in Brentwood Bay and Glenwood Meats in Langford are all good sources of locally sourced meats as well. Farmers' markets are also excellent places to source local meats. At the Moss Street Market, Terra Nossa Farms sells their chicken, pork and eggs. Terra Nossa is located in the Cowichan Valley and are in the transition phase of organic certification. This means that all their livestock feed is certified organic, the animals are unmedicated, no chemicals or pesticides are used on the property and their fence posts are natural untreated cedar.

That takes care of buying meat you can feel good about preparing at home, but where can you eat out with the knowledge that you are being served quality meats? As it turns out, Victoria has many choices. Slater's regularly supplies meats to Café Brio, Brasserie L'Ecole, Camille's, La Piola and the Heron Rock Bistro. More and more eateries are declaring their support of local produce and meat products on their websites and on their menus. The Hernande'z Cocina website tells us that both their beef and pork are locally raised and unmedicated. The Pink Bicycle Gourmet Burger Joint offers organic Vancouver island bison from the Island Bison Ranch in the Comox Valley as well as all-natural lamb and mutton from Sea Bluff Farm in Metchosin. Choux Choux Charcuterie serves only free-range unmedicated pork from Sloping Hill Farm in Qualicum Beach, Mill Bay rabbit and Cobble Hill lamb. AJ's Organic Catering provides organic catering possibilities in Victoria as well.

If your favourite restaurant doesn't advertise where they source their meats from, why not politely inquire? Start a conversation with the owners or chefs and explain your preference

Gen Laplante

Heidi at the Pink Bicycle and the Metchosin Lamb Burger with blue cheese & apricot pesto

for organic, or free-range, unmedicated meats. It is ultimately the consumer demand that is paving the way for a more sustainable food system. As is demonstrated in countless studies, articles and movies like Food Inc., the feedlot model is not a sustainable or healthy option for the planet, the animals or the humans who eat them. The certified organic sticker provides a helpful shortcut to consumers, guaranteeing that those products have been raised naturally. But when those stickers are not available, we still have the power to make choices that can have a positive impact on our health and the long-term health of our environment. By asking how the meat you eat was raised, and by considering how it got to your plate, you are "rectifying the names" and participating in an important shift towards progress. The bonus is that progress tastes great.

THE SOURCES

Planet Organic: www.planetorganic.ca
Hills Foods (Wild!): www.hillsfoods.com
Mcleans Organic foods: www.mecleanorganicfoods.com
Woodstown Farms (part of the Wellshire Farm family): www.wellshirefarms.com
Lifestyles Markets: www.lifestylemarkets.com
Slater's First Class Meats: 2577 Cadboro Bay Road, 250-590-0823.
Island Meat and Seafood: www.islandmeatandseafood.com
Farmhouse Poultry: www.farmhousepoultry.ca/
Cowichan Bay Farms: www.cowichanbayfarm.com/
Thomas Reid Farms: www.trforganic.com/
Spud! : www.spud.ca/
Share Organics: www.shareorganics.bc.ca/
Ambrosio Markets and Delis: 3 locations in Victoria
Galloping Goose Sausage: www.islandnet.com/~sausage/
The Red Barn: 5325 Cordova Bay Road, 250-658-2998
Orr and Son's Butcher: www.orrsbutchers.com/
Glenwood Meats: www.glenwoodmeats.ca/
Pemberton Meadows: www.pembertonmeadowsbeef.com/
Two Rivers: www.tworiversmeats.com/
Empire Beef: www.empirevalleybeef.com/
Fir Hill Farms: www.firhillfarms.com/
Island Bison: www.islandbison.com/
Terra Nossa Farms: www.terranossa.ca/
The Meating Place Market: 5715 Sooke Road, 250-642-2288
Cowichan Valley Meat Market: Quist Farms, 5191 Koksilah Frontage Rd, Duncan, 250.746.8732
Thrifty Foods: www.thriftyfoods.com

A RECTIFICATION OF NAMES

(What the labels mean)

Certified Organic:
In this province, "certified organic" designates a product that has been approved by an accredited certification body. The Certified Organic Associations of BC (CAOBC) is the umbrella association created in 1993 under the Agri-Food Choice and Quality Act to administer the BC Certified Organic Program. For more information on the association, visit www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca.

Grass-fed/pasture-raised beef:
Cattle that have been raised on a primarily foraged diet.

Grass-finished:
This term is used in two ways. One way denotes cattle that have been fed-grass exclusively, including finishing. The other refers to cattle that are grain-fed until finishing, when they were switched to grass.

Grain-fed:
Cattle that are fed a diet of corn and soy-based feed.

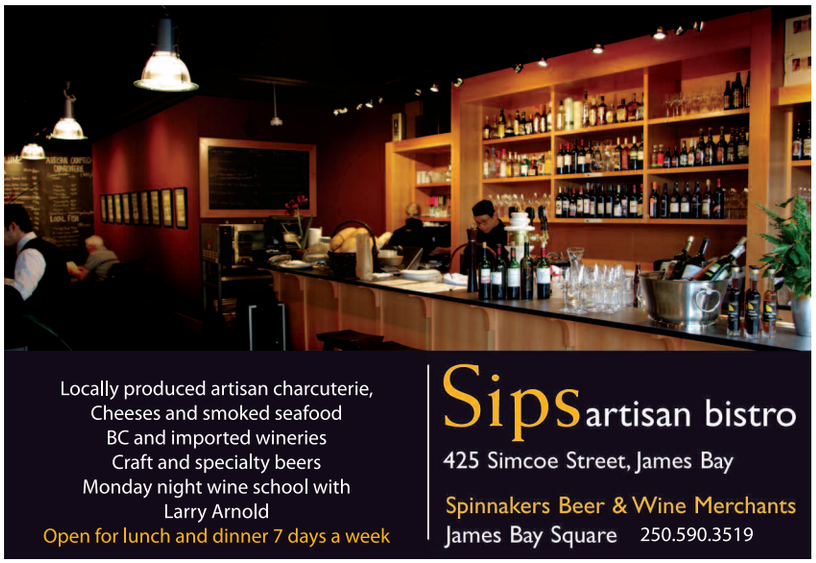
Free range/naturally-raised/humanely raised/cruelty-free:
These terms refer to the quality of life of the animal raised for slaughter. Free range asserts that the animal was not confined to a pen or cage. While these terms are nice to see, it is important to note that none of these terms are regulated by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (the CFIA sets out rules for claims made on packaging and in advertisements). The terms are not legally defined in Canada, nor do they require certification or third-party verification. Most products making these claims do come from small-scale farms, whose operations are known and trusted by their suppliers and customers.

Antibiotic-free/unmedicated:
Meat that was raised without being treated with antibiotics. The concern regarding antibiotic use in animals has less to do with the minimal risks the residue in meat may pose to humans, and more to do with the link this practice has to an increase in antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

Hormone-free:
This can be a confusing one. Hormones are naturally present in animals. What this label is saying is that the animal that produced the meat was not implanted with hormones, nor were hormones administered in their feed. The use of growth hormones in beef and pork remains highly controversial. In Canada, the use of hormones in chicken feed was banned in the 1960s. Thus, all chicken raised in Canada is "hormone free."

Kosher:
Slaughtered and prepared in accordance with the requirements of Jewish law. Rules regarding food are found in the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy. Meat must be slaughtered satisfying the requirements set out in those books, specifying how the blood must be drained from the body and the meat is to be blessed by a rabbi.

Halal:
Meat slaughtered and prepared in accordance with Muslim law.



Meat Inspection Regulation Amendments

Purchasing meat from local farmers who slaughter and process their own animals will soon keep you on the right side of the law.

The shady side cropped up when the provincial government introduced the Meat Inspection Regulation (MIR) in 2004 as a way to standardize meat production across the province. Directing that all animals—be it chickens, rabbits, ducks or lambs—sold for human consumption be slaughtered in a provincial or federally licensed abattoir, the regulations turned countless farm-gate transactions into subversive acts subject to hefty fines. That's because many small-scale producers could not access a licensed facility within reasonable travelling distances or found that processing a handful of chickens or the odd side of beef was financially prohibitive. Others simply preferred to continue to handle their animals from farm to table and had customers, often just a few friends and neighbours, in firm support.

Realizing the regulations were not viable in many areas of the province, the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport recently introduced amendments and brought in two new license categories. These will allow for the on-farm slaughter of a small number of animals and direct sales of meat to local consumers and, in some instances, local food establishments. To start, the new regulations will apply only to livestock producers in the Bella Coola, Powell River and Haida Gwaii regions, but ministry officials have said that license applications from other areas of the province will be accepted by the end of summer.

Though the amendments are intended to "serve British Columbia's remote and rural communities," one of the new licenses will be available to producers regardless of their location if the case can be made for processing one's own animals. The opportunity is good news for consumers in southern B.C. Very little of the region is counted among the "remote and rural," yet a strong movement exists to buy local while remaining on the right side of government regulations. *–By Laurie Guy*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

EXCEPTIONAL EATS! AWARDS

Your 'Best of' publication is stellar. I live in Vancouver and could only hope that the annual collection of restaurant and food reviews in our local papers could be so succint and relevant. Well done!
—Paul Muscat, Vancouver

THE SCHNITZEL DIARY

I just the article about the German schnitzel night at the Edelweiss. Very funny! Just wanted to point out that the head caterer's name is Ursula, not Rosella. We had our wedding reception there and Ursula is amazing, so just wanted to make sure she gets her due credit! *—Heather Hill*

COMOX SHELLFISH DINNER DRAW

I love your magazine. It has helped me immeasurably since we moved here. Awesome info and leads on all the good eats. Love the recipes too! Have you thought of having a novice recipe column?!! Open to submissions for anyone with good ideas?!! *—Tracy Gatabaki, Victoria*

Thanks, it's a great idea - Editor

LOCAL KITCHEN

I was thrilled to see the new addition of recipe wine pairings (as requested) in your latest issue of *EAT*. Good idea, too, to give a country recommendation and a general description and leave it up to the reader to buy in their preferred price range.
—Barbara Black

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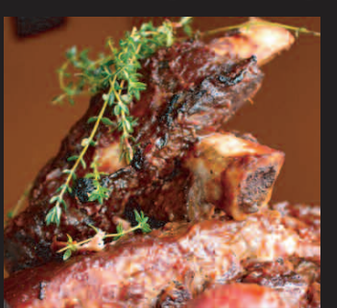
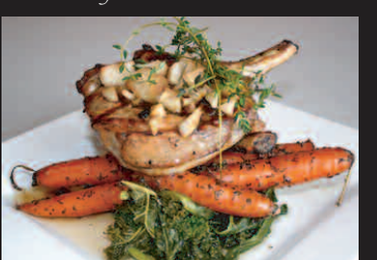
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Recipes and food styling by **JENNIFER DANTER**
Photography by **MICHAEL TOURIGNY**
Wine pairing by **TREVE RING**

Market Lunch

A visit to Moss Street Market inspires and enlivens in that hands-on way that only a great outdoor market can. All that abundant freshness and energy works its magic. With each vegetable, fruit or food you hold, your brain excites and instantly creates endless enticing dishes. Before you know it, you've planned a menu. Next step....guests!

Raspberry-Buttermilk Crunch Cake

recipe on page 29

Summer Zucchini Tart

This pizza-style tart doesn't need to be served hot from the oven. It's the kind of food that encourages lingering and nibbling. Mellow zucchini blends wonderfully with silky ricotta flavoured with buttery leeks and garlic.

1 leek, thinly sliced
Knobs of Butter
2 medium-sized zucchini
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 heaping Tbsp chopped fresh thyme
425 g tub ricotta
All-purpose flour, for dusting
397 g pkg frozen puff pastry, defrosted
1 tsp Olive oil
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
Large ball buffalo mozzarella
TRY: Fairburn Farm Buffalo Mozzarella
Fresh basil leaves

Sauté leek in butter over medium heat until soft, 6 to 8 min.

Meanwhile cut 1 zucchini into small cubes. Add to softened leek along with garlic. Sauté until tender, about 5 min. Remove from heat and stir in thyme. Cool completely, then stir with ricotta.

Dust counter and top of pastry with flour. Roll pastry into a long rectangle about 16.5 x 11.5 in. Let rest for a minutes - it's OK if pastry shrinks back somewhat. Trim edges to straighten.

Place pastry on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Using a knife, score a border about 1-in. in from edge. Prick pastry within the border all over with a fork. Score pastry edge with decorative, shallow knife slashes.

Bake in preheated 450F oven for 10 min.

Spread ricotta mixture over pastry (in border). Continue baking until pastry is very puffy and deep golden, 15 to 18 more minutes. Meanwhile, slice remaining zucchini into thin rounds. Toss with olive oil and season with pinches of salt and pepper. Arrange in layers over ricotta. Tear mozzarella into small pieces and scatter over top. Garnish with fresh basil leaves.

WINE

old world - Grüner Veltliner from Austria. Citrus, herbal, oily-silken texture and bright acid to match the greenness of this dish.

new world – unoaked Chardonnay from BC. A stainless-steel chard with bright lemon and granny smith apple, and creamy mouthfeel – will pair to the verdy veg plus the silken cheese.

BEER

Lighthouse Brewing Company Race Rocks Ale
Dark amber hue, with toasted malt, orange oil and nut notes, this smooth ale goes down easy.

Marinated Moss St. Market Tomatoes

The beauty of this dish lies in its simplicity plus the freshest tomatoes in town.

Stir 3 Tbsp vinegar (I like rice vinegar) with 1 Tbsp brown sugar or honey until dissolved. Gently warm 1/2 cup olive oil. Stir in 2 minced garlic cloves and 1/2 tsp each mustard seeds, fennel seeds and ground turmeric. Chop 4 big red tomatoes into wedges and 15 colourful cherry tomatoes in half. Grind sea salt and black pepper overtop. Place in a large mason jar and add 2 chopped green onions and a handful of fresh basil leaves. Pour in oil mixture and let stand 15 minutes. Dish up over salad greens.

FRESH MARKET DINING

Raspberry-Buttermilk Crunch Cake

Summer raspberries add a seedy crunch this dense brown sugar crumb cake.

1 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 tsp each baking powder and baking soda
1/2 tsp salt
1/2 tsp ground cardamom (optional)
1/2 cup butter, room temperature
2/3 cup lightly packed brown sugar
1/4 tsp each vanilla and almond extract
1 egg
1/2 cup buttermilk (shake well before measuring)
1 heaping cup fresh raspberries
1 Tbsp granulated sugar

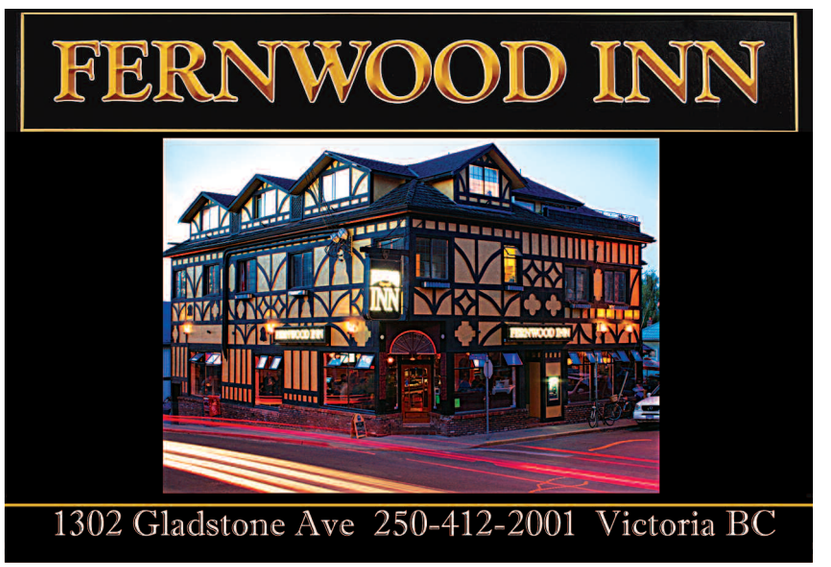
Whisk flour with baking powder, baking soda and salt and cardamom.

Using an electric mixer, beat butter until smooth, then beat in brown sugar until well mixed. Beat in extracts, then egg. Working in batches, alternately mix in flour mixture and buttermilk. Finish with flour.

Scrape batter into a greased 9-in. round cake pan. Scatter, then press in raspberries. Sprinkle with granulated sugar. Bake in preheated 400F oven for 20 min. Reduce heat to 375F. Continue baking until a toothpick inserted in centre comes out clean, 10 to 15 more min. Cool before serving. Dish up with thick creamy yogurt.

WINE
old world: **Brachetto d' Acqui** from Piedmonte, Italy. Sparkling red, effervescent and not too sweet, with a wild berry flavor and fizzy buzz.

new world: Late harvest wine from red grapes. Red berries in crumble = red grapes in glass. Try to find a late harvest Merlot or Cabernet Franc (look to BC).



Discover all that Saanich

Spend the day exploring the pennisula...

Stunning water views of the Saanich Inlet and the Strait of Georgia, adjacent islands, and mountains makes this an inspiring community to visit.

has to offer

Start your tour in the charming town of Sidney-by-the-Sea, one of Vancouver Island's best kept secrets. A mere twenty minute drive from Victoria, Sidney is a bustling seaside community with a relaxed attitde. Stop in at **Muffet & Louisa** and see their new location in the Landmark Building. This shop is more than a kitchen store and carries high-quality items for the dining room, bedroom and bath as well as the kitchen. Further along Beacon Avenue (the main drag) you'll coming to the stunning new **Sidney Pier Hotel & Spa** overlooking the harbour. Stay for awhile or dine in Haro's Restaurant + Bar. Open lunch and dinner, Haro's offers waterfront dining, a heated outdoor terrace, a comfortable lounge, and a bustling café all under one roof.

Leaving Sidney we head out into the countryside where we can meander the back roads and visit farms, cideries, wineries, eateries, pubs and more.

First pullover is **Sea Cider Farm & Ciderhouse** where organic apples are fermented into traditional artisan cider. Sample the ciders while enjoying the tasting menu that showcases artisan cheeses and cured meats.

Continuing west we come to the most northerly part of the Pennisula called Deep Cove. Here you will find **Deep Cove Market** and **Muse Winery**. The market boasts local seasonal produce from numerous Peninsula growers, including local artisan cheeses, free-range eggs , poultry and organics. The Deep Cove Market staff believe in sustainability and local support. They also provides a mouthwatering array of locally baked goodies to satisfy your sweet tooth. Muse Winery, owned by Jane & Peter Ellmann welcomes the public to come a taste their award-winning wines. The Bistro offers an intimate alfresco open-air dining patio nestled next to the vineyard. If you have time check out the open air theatre production of Dial "M" for Merlot.

Heading back toward Victoria, **Zanzibar Cafe** is a peaceful oasis surrounded by gardens, open for breakfast, lunch and dinner and featuring Chef Mohamed Dehairi's global flavours and local tastes. Try the Thai Sweet & Sour Panko Red Snapper.

Contuing along the western side of the Pennisula we come to the town of Brentwood Bay nestled into the Saanich Inlet. The village offers excellent accommodation, waterfront restaurants, and all amenities, and is also a jumping-off point for kayakers, canoeists and mountain hikers. **Brentwood Bay Lodge & Spa** is a full service luxury resort with two gastronomic dining options. The SeaGrille offers specatular seafood dining along with the finest of wines while Brentwood Pub delivers a casual Westcoast menu and a excellent selection of local craft beers. At the other end of town **Bistro Caché** features the regional cooking of Chef Matt Thompson. Matt's menu emphasizes fresh, local produce and humanely raised meats, sustainable fish and supports local farms. Near the world famous Butchert Gardens the tasting room at **Church and State Wines** is open seven days a week and is where you can sample wines made to the highest standards. A delicious lunch is prepared by Chef Kevin Gomes Wednesday - Sunday. Wine and beautiful food. What could be better?

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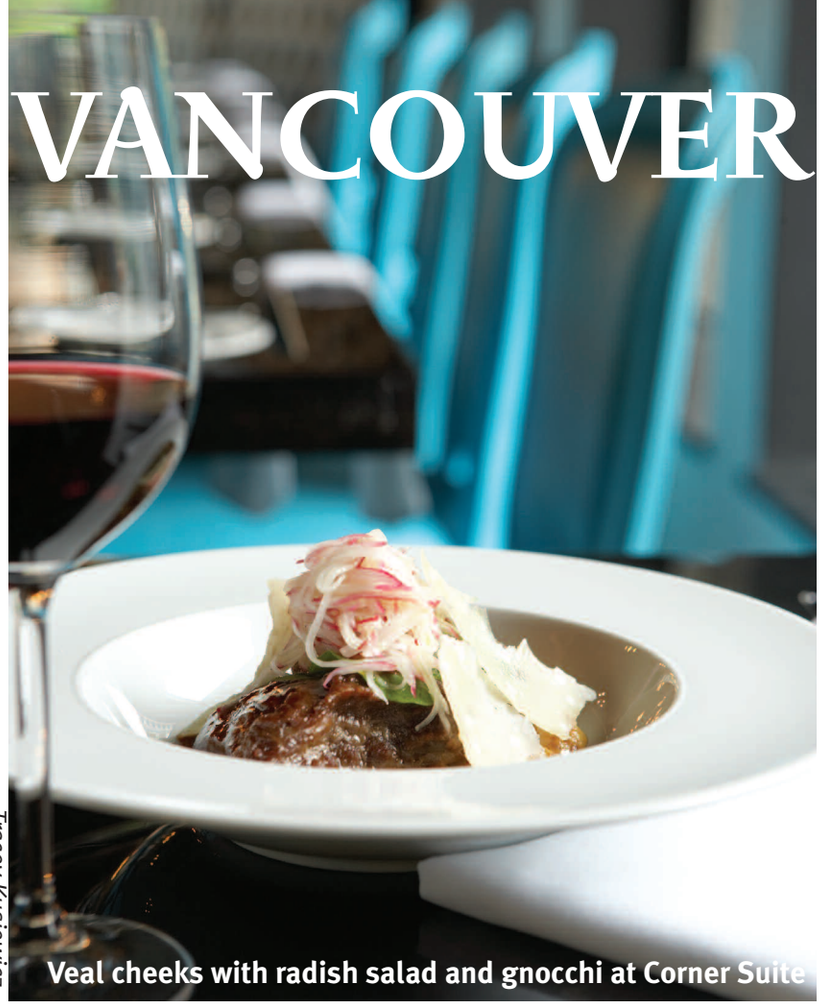

Tracey Kusiewicz

Veal cheeks with radish salad and gnocchi at Corner Suite

Corner Suite Bistro | 850 Thurlow Street, Vancouver | 604.569.3415

The intersection of Smithe and Thurlow is a lively bit of real estate. A continually active firehall occupies half a block; west end locals scurry along clutching IGA enviro-bags of groceries from said store at Burrard a block away; Sutton Place hotel guests amble toward the leafy streets on their way to Stanley Park. On its northeast corner **Steve Da Cruz** and **Alex McGillivray** (ex Chambar, Lumiere, Boneta) launched, after many Tylenols and much turmoil (a venting problem caused months long headaches and delay), the lush and luxe **Corner Suite Bistro** just in time for the Olympics. *Food Network* celebrity chef, **Anthony Sedlak** (the Main) resigned just prior to the restaurant's opening. Luckily very competent sous-chef **Jason Leizert** held up the stove.

Befitting the rich interior–the love 'em or loathe 'em rubber dipped turquoise Louis XIV chairs (unbelievably comfy), tufted black leather banquettes, granite dining tables with napkin slots and hooks to hang your hat or handbag, and the Venus Century espresso machine (resembles an ornate Russian samovar; only 100 world-wide) are equally opulent food and drink menus. The bar boasts 764 (or is that 674?) bottles of booze. Should the cocktail tome be far too overwhelming to study, one may simply order the venue's signature "Vancouver" cocktail–a quality gin, vermouth and Benedictine concoction served ungarnished. It is "The Genuine Article".

As to the food, confit duck and potatoes, rillettes, rabbit and a Croque Madame whose huge golden yoked crispy fried egg beams from atop the sandwich are as decadent as they sound. Double-smoked bacon tops the Station 7 burger, is tossed with gnocchi, "seasons" local scallops and line-caught halibut, or is made into jam. The words butter, cream and oil appear frequently on the menu, sometimes saffroned, often truffled. Yet dishes are in no way heavy or stodgy. Offsetting such rich flavours is a spike of citrus or wine, seasonal vegetables and Leizert's deft touch.

On a recent visit my octopus salad a starter feature of the day, consisted of thin tentacle coins, bedded down with pickled samphire (sea asparagus). Qualicum Bay Scallops were seared golden with perfectly "underdone" middles and served with truffled French beans, aforesaid bacon, croutons, and spring morels. Out of the oven crisp crusted bread wiped the remaining sauce. Previously on a cooler evening, I dined on veal cheeks so meltingly tender my I swooned. It was almost embarrassing.

Desserts like lemon meringue pie with rhubarb compote, and vanilla crem brulee tempt but fall far short of this girl's love of cheese. Corner Suite offers no fewer than fifty. I am happy to wash down the remainder of a very serviceable and modestly priced Fitou with a generous chunk of mellow washed-rind creamy baluchon from Ste-Anne de la Perade, Quebec and a firm nutty Swiss Alpine "vigneron".

Leizert's dishes are extremely well prepared. Be warned portions can be somewhat undersized for the price–especially salads. It's possible to spend a little or a lot. An after theater wine and cheese course is a perfect, and affordable way to cap the evening. Or enjoy a cocktail and petits bijoux (perhaps a mini crock of French onion soup, croque mademoiselle or small tuna Nicoise before you step out. Or sip wine and nibble a couple of petit plats after shopping.

But when rain pelts down, grey descends, and the wallet permits hunker into a banquette or tuck into one of those turquoise chairs and enjoy a decadent evening of wining, dining and watching street "theater" through the unadorned floor to near-ceiling windows. *–By Julie Pegg*

(small plates $5-$15; mains $15-$28;2-course daily feature $24)

Corner Suite is *Oceanwise*

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Nanaimo

Let me open with 'a swoon for your spoon.' Nanaimo's downtown food scene just got a huge infusion of maximum yum. **Diners Rendezvous** [489 Wallace Street, Nanaimo, Tel: 250-740-1133] is passionate restaurateur **Peter Ertsos**' newest hot spot. I guess I should say "Heeeee'ssssss back!" Ertsos took a breather from the F&B biz for a while after selling two of his past foodie successes. Rendezvous' kitchen is headed by Chef **Ian Ter Veer**, ex of **Wesley Street Café** and **Paige Point Inn**. Together these two men are defining fun, fanciful, big city-style dining. The "very-shareable" menu roams around the edges of the Pacific Rim with a definite bent towards fresh, lively PNW cuisine, punchy California flavs and then it hops the pond to Asia and swoops down-under for a splash down in OZ. The Rendezvous has a history in Nanaimo and locals will remember the room for its "dining under the stars" legendary past. That's all back and then some. It is one of the few places in town to wear your "little black dress" (Guys, you are off the hook on this one), kick up your heels (fabo old-fashioned real wooden dance floor), drink smart cocktails and engage in clever conversation while dining on food that will have you thinking Yaletown or Portland. The ladies of *Sex in the City* would be right at home in this spot!

Seafood does not come any fresher than fishing off the end of a dock. In this case it is a big commercial fishing dock and someone else has done the fishing for you. **French Creek Seafood** [Lee Road, Parksville, Tel: 250-248-7100] is a commercial family-operation with a retail outlet attached to the processing plant. Take a cooler and indulge in "just-caught" halibut, tuna, rock fish, crab, prawns and ling cod. Think ingredients for bouillabaisse and just keep on going with the selection available. They also sell all kinds of gourmet add-ons to season and spice up your Pacific plunder, many of which are produced by local suppliers.

Sure you can go to Starbuck's for your daily cuppa, but why bother? Luckily we have access to luscious, organic, perfectly-roasted, free-trade coffee, and it's a local operation, so indulge. **Creekmore's Coffee** [the 5,000 sq/ft roasting plant is located near Coombs, 2107 Alberni Highway # 4, Tel: 250-752-0158] is owned by **Elaine** and **David Creekmore**. To walk into the retail store at the roasting plant is to turn beagle and sniff the air like a bean-hound. Their espresso coffees will make you stand up and pay attention and are not for the faint of heart – in fact, they kick serious-butt. Their coffees are sold at many locations around Vancouver Island, but for the full-on buzz, go directly to the plant.

CONT'D ON PAGE 34

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If dense, chewy, intensely flavourful European style breads are your thing, oh mamma, get thee hence to **La Boulange Organic Bakery** [692 Bennett Road, Qualicum Beach, Tel: 250-752-0077]. Owned by **Jean Wilson** and **John Traynor**, the breads are made using a naturally-leavened "mother" as the starter and follow the slow-rise bread-making philosophy. Ergo, the flavours have time to fully evolve, becoming complex, earthy and richly textured. But it is not just the breads that will have you groaning in public. The cinnamon buns have a cult following and if you do not get to the bakery on the dot of opening, forget it – they're gone.

To wrap-it-up, let's talk sushi. You'd think finding good sushi on an island that hangs on the edge of the Pacific would be easy. Nope. Most places crate in frozen farmed fish and plunk it down in front of you so cold it gives you ice-cream brain-freeze and it's accompanied by a side order of guilt trip. Not so **Sushi Ichi** [541 E Island Hwy, Parksville, Tel: 250-954-2020]. This family-run local favourite is consistently good-quality sashimi, nigiri and maki and they get much of their wild fish from local suppliers. Not all, to be sure, because they do bring in some products from Japan like the soft-shelled crab. But the sea urchin, when in season, is local, plump and succulent.

–By Su Grimmer

Victoria

The change of seasons marks a time of transition on Victoria's culinary terrain – some events winding down just as farmers' markets and gardening workshops get into full gear. **Haro's Restaurant** at the **Sidney Pier Hotel** has just wrapped up their very successful 'Meet your Maker' series, which featured the following local food and drink producers; **Sea Cider**, **Muse Winery**, **Victoria Spirits**, **Averill Creek Winery**, **Saanich Organics**, **Hilary's Cheese**, **Island Farmhouse Poultry**, **Phillips Beer** and **Moonstruck Cheese**. Keep an eye on their website (*www.sidneypier*) for the fall lineup, starting in September.

Dining on the Dock. Plenty of activity at the **Marina Restaurant** in Oak Bay this summer. July 25th Transport yourself to an outdoor family dinner in the south of France. Think herbs, local fish, olives and olive oil, bouillabaisse, tomatoes, preserved lemons, bright flavours, all complimented with French wines and the beautiful glow of a mid-summer evening on the seaside. Then, Sunday, August 29th Off the Grill is chef **Matt Rissling**'s take on the classic weekend barbeque. Ribs, oysters, fish, slaw, fresh corn with lime and sea salt, and the best local produce on the grill paired with vivacious barbeque-friendly wines and brews. Oh, and fresh peach cobbler. Finally check out the Harvest Dinner on Sunday, September which will showcase the heartier braised cuts, harvest vegetables and fruit that mark the end of summer and the arrival of fall on the south island, like local apple crisp. Pick of the crop from **Vantreight Farms** and the Saanich peninsula's **Sea Cider Ciderhouse**. All dinners are $59, three course served family style on long tables, and there's the inside of the coffee house in case summer truly never comes. 250-598-8555.

Terralicious Gardening and Cooking School has ended operations on **Haliburton Farm**, as owner **Dayle Cosway** prepares to begin a new adventure in Berkeley, California. We send Dayle our best wishes as she embarks on this next chapter. **The Superior Café** in James Bay has also announced that they are approaching the start of a new culinary canvas with a new location, name, menu, and concept, but the same chef, coming this fall. (So make the most of the Superior you've loved for the past five years over the summer months!)

Other moves include **Shiki Sushi**'s relocation from Fort St. to 1113 Blanshard. **Beirut Restaurant Ltd**. is slated to fill the gap - both in the location (787 Fort St.) and in the absence of Lebanese cuisine downtown. With promises of shawarmas and falafels posted on the windows, this prospect is giving fans of Lebanese food something to look forward to. Across the street at 766 Fort, **Haru Japanese Cuisine and BBQ** has opened and is quietly gaining a loyal following. In James Bay, **The Blue Note Café** has recently opened at the corner of Menzies and Toronto, serving salads, sandwiches, coffee and pastries. **Brock Windsor** (former chef at **Sooke Harbour House**, **Bearfoot Bistro** and former administrator of the **ICC Bastion Square Farmers' Market**) has opened the **Stone Soup Inn** with his partner **Ayako Windsor** in the Cowichan Valley. The restaurant is open from 5 pm -10 pm Thursday through Saturday, and their bed and breakfast will also be opening for business this summer. For more information, visit their website (*www.stonesoupinn.ca*)

July will see **Lifestyle Markets** celebrating fifteen years of healthy lifestyles in Victoria. Festivities are planned for July 9th, 10th, 16th and 17th at their Douglas Street location.

The **Taste** festival returns for a second year, with over thirty participating wineries and an exciting choice of events. The Main Event, a local cuisine and wine tasting evening, kicks off the festival at the Crystal Gardens on Thursday, July 15th. Other highlights include a sustainable seafood session with **Bob Fraumeni** from **Finest at Sea**, "Swine on the Vine", a pig roast on the patio of **The Pacific Restaurant** at **Hotel Grand Pacific** and an Italian long lunch at **La Piola**. Check the Taste website to view the full schedule of events (*www.victoriataste.com*)

If you enjoy a little entertainment with your wine, you will be pleased to hear that **Muse Winery** has partnered with the Peninsula Players to present the peninsula's first open air musical

CONT'D ON PAGE 38

WELCOME TO COWICHAN BAY

shop. dine. relax.

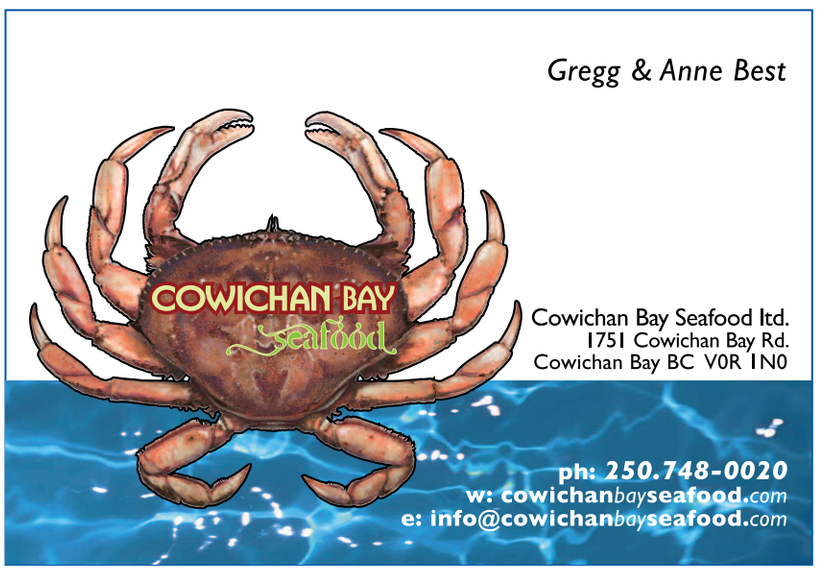
cittaslow

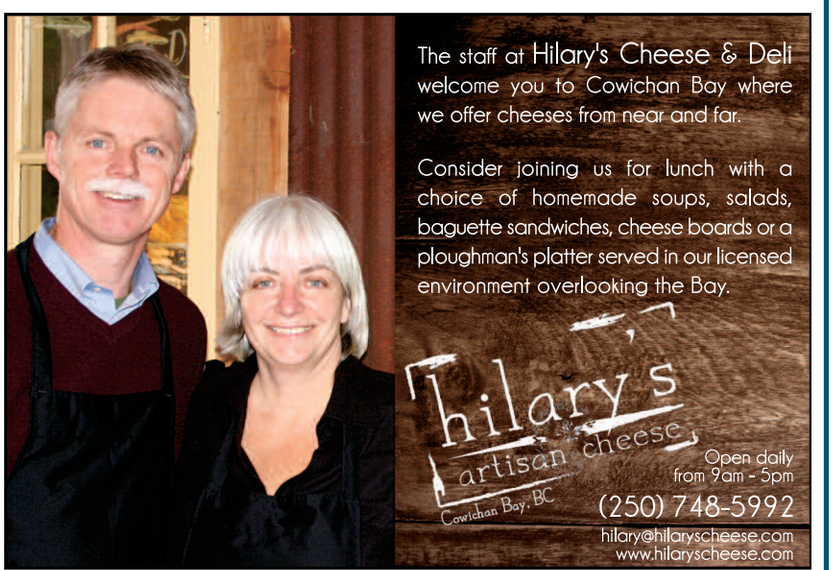
Cowichan Bay, a picturesque seaside village a short drive north of Victoria, is emerging as a little culinary oasis on Vancouver Island and quickly becoming known as the gastronomic epi-centre of the Cowichan Valley region.

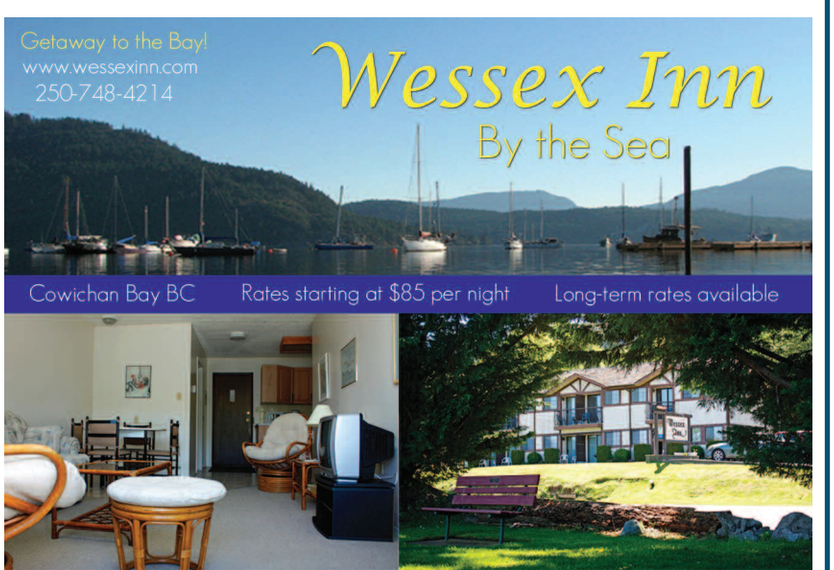
A vista of ocean, sail and fishing boats, piers, wharves, floating homes, small shops and restaurants greet you as you come down the hill into the village. Most of the action takes place along the main street which runs along the waterfront. Visitors come to stroll the shops and galleries, enjoy a fine meal or simply to grab a snack. But the village is also becoming a hub for searching out and sampling local southern Vancouver Island foods and wines.

If it's seafood you are looking for, the new **Cowichan Bay Seafood** shop is the place to go. Owners Gregg and Anne Best are commercial crab and prawn fishermen and pioneers in sustainable seafood production. Fresh from the sea, halibut cheeks – pan seared , drizzled with a light citrus dressing - a great salad topper – fresh, simple, delicious. A little further along the street **Hilary's Cheese & Deli** offers visitors a change to relax and savour cheeses produced locally or from further afield. Bring summer onto your plate with Hilarys own fresh Chevre, the cheese of summer. It's a natural with smoked salmon, fresh greens or local asparagus. For 5-star, casually elegant dining, a short stroll will bring you to **The Masthead Restaurant**. Owner/manager Luke Harms has perfected the art of dining well with both the menu and the wine list celebrating local foods and wines from the nearby farms and wineries. Looking for a great place to stay while visiting Cowichan Bay? **Wessex Inn "By the Sea** is quaint seaside Inn located in the beautiful village of Cowichan Bay, close to many restaurants, art galleries, shops and things to see and do. Family owned and operated since 1985, Robin Painter decided to capitalize on her experience in the industry and, with her family, will continue to run the Wessex Inn as a family operation. Make Cowichan Bay your base for touring the region. Worth a visit are many neighbouring wineries and farms, quality coffee shops and farmers markets. *For more information on your visit to Cowichan Bay go to www.cowichanbay.com*

Fresh Sheet: The **Cowichan Bay Art Walk** takes place along the waterfront in the Village Saturday, July 10th to Sunday, July 11th. And this year's **10th Annual Grape Escape MS Bike Tour** will be the biggest yet and will take place August 14th.







Mount Washington Alpine Food Festival

September 3 - 5, 2010

Featuring locally grown food and globally inspired flavours,

September long weekend is the perfect time for a festival highlighting the produce and bounty of the summer's harvest. Mount Washington's Alpine Food Festival does just that. The festival, running from September 3 to 5, offers a Wine and Cheese Reception, Culinary Classes, a gala dinner, and the Alpine Marketplace. Celebrity and guest chefs will be present all weekend, hosting cooking classing, signing books and sharing their favourite recipes and classic dishes.

Anthony Sedlak,
Anthony Sedlak, chef and author, competed in and won Food Network's Superstar Chef Challenge. He has since hosted four seasons of his own show on Food Network Canada, *The Main*. Sedlak is a best selling Canadian author for his cookbook which features easy to follow recipes from his show. "I am devoted to simple classics and top-shelf ingredients. I'm passionate about simple flavours and flawless technique and want to wow the connoisseurs looking for the whole story behind the dishes I present." -Sedlak

Tahera Rawji
Born on the island of Zanzibar,Tahera was raised in East Africa and showcases the flavours of the East in her cooking.Tahera has taught the secrets, tips and histories of the varied dishes of Pakistan, India and the Middle East in her popular cooking classes.

Maria Elena Cuervo-Lorens
Maria Elena was born and raised in Mexico City. She can frequently be found sharing her authentic Mexican recipes in kitchen studios, and at book signings in local bookstores throughout Canada. Maria Elena now resides in Victoria, British Columbia.

Alpine Food Festival Accommodation Packages

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Dining Experiences

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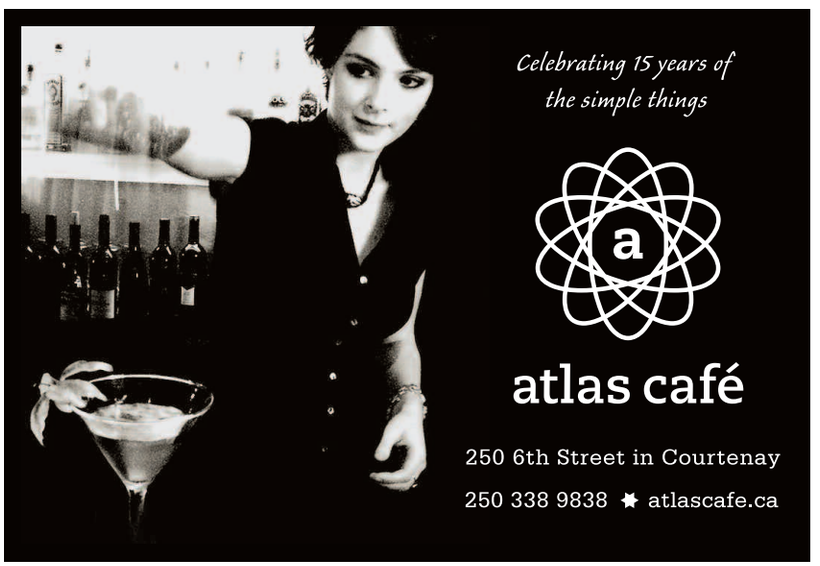

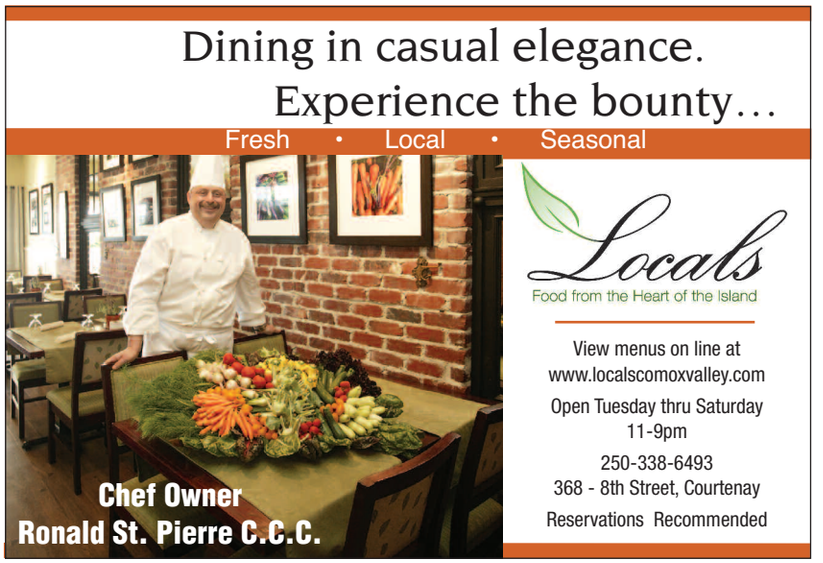

theater production. Dial "M" for Merlot is a "musical murder mystery" show of musical numbers and dances performed by talented artists from the peninsula and further a field. Written by **Sasha Moriarty Schieven**, directed by **Gerald Schieven** and produced by **Dick Mels** in association with Muse winery owners **Peter** and **Jane Ellmann**. A great evening of fun and frivolity is guaranteed, along with succulent bistro savories, and of course superb wines from Muse Winery cellars. Tickets are available at the following businesses: Stone Street Café, Salon J, Victoria Costumes, Brentwood Bay Sr. Center and Muse Winery.

The Atrium (corner Yates and Blanshard) is still scheduled to open in August, which means new homes for **Zambri's**, **Pig BBQ**, and **AJ's Organics**, as well as a second location for **Habit**. We're looking forward to watching these local businesses settle into their new spaces. Also coming in August is the fourth annual **North Saanich Flavour Trail**. Held August 21 and 22, 2010, this is a tour of North Saanich farms, wineries, nurseries, markets and restaurants showcasing North Saanich food production. The North Saanich Agricultural Advisory Commission is organizing the event with the sponsorship of the District of North Saanich. This event will allow participants to view and experience some hands-on activities at our local farms. (*www.northsaanich.ca*) To cap off the summer, don't miss **Feast of Fields**, **FarmFolk/CityFolk**'s annual fundraiser, on September 19th from 1-5 pm. This year's event will be held at the **Parry Bay Sheep Farm** in Metchosin. Tickets go on sale July 1st. (*www.feastoffields.com*).

–By Rebecca Baugniet

OKANAGAN

In the Okanagan, we love to celebrate our wine country so much that we host a Wine Festival every season! **Silver Star Mountain Resort** is the stunning mountain venue set for the **3rd Annual Okanagan Summer Wine Festival** from August 5-7, 2004. Come enjoy our local food and wine, wine education seminars and wine tasting events all in a wildflower covered mountain village. *www.thewinefestivals.com*

Working Horse Farm and Winery has announced collaboration with BC's Artisan Sake Maker **Masa Shiroki**. They plan to grow organic Japanese rice for Masa Shiroki's sake production. The rice grown on the farm is focusing on developing new sustainable local sake rice growing techniques under Masa's guidance. Check out *www.workinghorsevineyard.com* - where the vineyard's owner, **Tilman Hainle** and his vineyard workers, sport custom kilts while in the vines (really!).

Kelowna has new French bistro to celebrate – **Le Plateau** in Tutt Street Square. Owner **Michael Gauthier** with chef **Darren Mitchell** in the kitchen (former sous-chef at **Waterfront Wines**) offer a 22-seat bistro (+10 seats on the patio in the summer) that serves traditional French food in an unpretentious fashion. Their goal is to offer good food and good wine at a fair price. *www.leplateaubistro.ca*

Just outside of Kelowna you will find a secret hideaway that draws locals and visitors by its welcoming atmosphere and great home cooked Italian food. **Ricardo's Mediterranean Kitchen** may seem a tad off the beaten path – but it is worth it. With a Tuscan style room, summer patio and fabulous local jazz songstress **Anna Jacyszyn** serenading on special nights- your dinner out will soon feel like a special occasion. *www.ricardos.ca*

Summerland's localites love new **Local • Lounge Grille** located in the beautiful **Summerland Waterfront Resort**. With two rooms to choose from, a huge lakeside patio and accommodation next door – what more could you want? How about an off-sales license, a dock where guests can pull up on their boats AND a gourmet take-away menu created fab in house chef **Paul Cecconi**! *www.thelocalgroup.ca*

Just up the way in Summerland you will find the landmark **Sumac Ridge Estate Winery**. Recently, Winery chef **Ryan Fuller** at their **Cellar Door Bistro** has transformed the menu into an exquisite offering of small plates. Ryan embraces the ability to pull local, seasonal, sustainable ingredients into one creative and colourful dish and enjoys incorporating an international spin. He loves working with winemaker **Jason James**'s portfolio of wines to pair his cuisine with. The new sparkling Gewürztraminer and Rosé just scream summer party! *www.sumacridge.com*

There are concerts galore happening this summer – and wineries seem to be the hottest new venue to host them at. As usual, **Tinhorn Creek Winery** in Oliver is hosting a dazzling array of musicians. This summer check out talent like Wide Mouth Mason on July 24th or Bedouin Soundclash September 11th. The Shakespeare Company also returns for the eighth consecutive summer to perform on select nights. Check out their website for all event listings. *www.tinhorn.com*

The Mission Hill Family Estate Reserve Concert Series begins on July 17 is the Midsummer Magic Okanagan Symphony Gala celebrating the OSO's 50th anniversary. Guests will enjoy dining alfresco with musical interludes throughout the evening showcasing OSO musicians and special guest artists. On August 7, musician Wil Campa will perform his unique blend of Afro-Cuban jazz music. On Labour Day Weekend, Friday September 3, Juno award winning jazz guitarist Jesse Cook will look to repeat his previous 2008 sold out show at the winery. The finale to the season is a benefit concert on September 18 by the Canadian Tenors with their eclectic mix of classical and contemporary pop, in support of Voices for Bulembu, a Vancouver-based charity doing transformational work in Africa. *www.missionhillwinery.com –By Jennifer Schell*

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THE COMOX VALLEY & NORTH

The good news: Congrats go to **Susan** & **Jeff Vandermolen** [5854 Pickering Road Courtenay 1-866-904-8466 *www.beaufortwines.ca*], co-owners of **Beaufort Vineyard & Estate Winery**: they've garnered 14 national and international medals. The good news for locals is that most of their wine is sold at the gate (in Merville) – and that they host wine picnics in the vineyard. And a bronze to **George Ehrler** and **Marla Limousin** at **Blue Moon Winery** [4905 Darcy Road, Courtenay 250-338-9765] for their Soleil at the *All Canadian Wine Competition*. Kudos also to the team at the **Kingfisher Oceanside Resort & Spa** [4330 Island Highway 250-338-1323 and 800-663-7929 *www.kingfisherspa.com*] who were just announced as "Top Voted Canadian Spa" by *2010 WestJet Value Awards*. The 'Fisher also sports changes to the menu and a new Food & Beverages leader as **Judy Armstrong** (with **Fairmont Hotels & Resorts** for many years, and most recently at the **Palliser Hotel** in Calgary) upgrades to coastal life. Big summer to-dos? The Kingfisher's July 9th Seafood Buffet.

Downtown Courtenay, new stuff is always happening at **Union Street Grill & Grotto** [477-5th Street 250-897-0081 *www.unionstreetgrill.ca*]. Daily updates to the *Facebook* page with direct links to the "specials," a summer menu with fresh fish highlights and customers can now go on line and get the second "special" for half price. The new owners of the **Roadrunner Cafe**, **Harvey** and **Jesus** [1190 Cliffe Ave. 250-897-8257] have added a Mexican twist to the staple breakfast and lunch menu. "We are not trying to be known as a Mexican restaurant , just one that serves authentic Mexican along with the more traditional breakfast the the Roadrunner Cafe was known for," says Harvey. A recent visit will have me coming back.

In Comox patios with views abound. **Martine's Bistro** [1754 Beaufort Ave, Comox 250-339-1199] has a patio with mountain and ocean views, but the patio is also a great excuse to enjoy the magic that host **Marcus** and his kitchen staff of Chef **Jessie** and 1st cook **Joe** dish out on a regular basis throughout the year. A must-dine place for visitors to the area. **TOTO Restaurant** Comox. I just visited TOTO [formerly Thyme on the Ocean -1832 Comox Ave, Comox 250-941-8686] where owners **Anna Martin** and husband Chef **Andrew Martin** are doing a "tapas plus" thing. A recent visit to the new TOTO will have me back for more. September 3-4-5 2010 the **Annual Alpine Food Fest** takes the region's harvest season to my favourite season in the hills at **Mount Washington Alpine Resort** [*www.mountwashington.ca/foodfestival* 1-888-231-1499]. Sunday features the Alpine Marketplace with 40 plus vendors, tastings, music, artisans and edible forest walks led by **Gwyn Sproule**. On another note... **Island Havens** [1-877-335-5531 *www.islandhavens.ca*] sounds like a cool place to stay, right next to the Fanny Bay Conservation Area and a short walk from **Greg Sawchuck**'s enchanting forest of sculptures. And *EAT* is now available at **Seeds Natural Foods Market**, "Cumberland's grocer" [2733 A Dunsmuir Ave 250-336-0129 *www.seedsfoodmarket.ca*]. The sad news? The venerable **Old House Restaurant**, the place where I learned to love escargot and cigars after dinner so many years ago... an institution which has gone through a couple of facelifts recently...it's now closed and up for sale. As it's located within the new **Old House Garden Inn** [*www.oldhousevillage.com*] it looks like a great resto opp for someone... *–By Hans Peter Meyer*

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liquid **assets** — by **Larry Arnold**

ROSE

Blasted Church Rosé VQA 08
British Columbia $19.00-21.00
Sometimes much pleasure can be found in the simplest of wines and this dark pink hued beauty is as pleasing to the eye as it is to the palate. Refreshing and thirst quenching with lovely strawberry and cherry flavours, vibrant acidity and a clean dry finish. One for the patio if summer ever arrives!

Salt Spring Pinot Noir Blanc de Noirs 09 British Columbia $20.00-22.00
Why wait for summer when any day is a good day to enjoy a glass of icy-cold rosé. Pale, dry and utterly refreshing with delicate strawberry flavours, some weight on the palate, plenty of finesse and a juicy crunch of invigorating acidity.

WHITE

Rodney Strong Charlotte's Home Sauvignon Blanc 08
California $19.00-21.00
A classic example of Sonoma County Sauvignon Blanc produced from estate grown fruit. Citrus, citrus and more citrus, with hints of apple, pear and some spicy notes dominate the palate and linger through the finish. Light and balanced with soft acidity! A lovely easy drinking Sauvignon Blanc for everyday drinking.

Truchard Carneros Roussanne 08
California $35.00-37.00
Roussanne, along with Marsanne and Viognier are the holy trinity of white wine production in the Rhone Valley in south-east France. Many enjoy Viognier, a few have tasted Marsanne but sadly, almost nobody on this coast has actually tasted Roussanne! Barrel-fermented and aged, "sur lie" for six months, this voluptuous white is pure joy to drink! Full-bodied with exotic fruit flavours and an unctuous texture balanced with a cut of juicy acidity.

Cailleteau Bergeron Premieres Cotes de Blaye Blanc 09 France $17.00-19.00
As the lyric goes: "Well I've been down so Goddamn long, that it looks like up to me," so goes the public perception of Bordeaux Blanc. Terrible, oxidized, dirty, well you know the refrain. The region had such a dismal track record making white wine, it's a wonder anybody still makes it. Well look again buckos! This Sauvignon is an absolute joy to drink. Clean, fresh and imminently quaffable with well-integrated oak and juicy grapefruit and peach flavours.

Muse Ortega Poetic Justice 09
British Columbia $20.00-22.00
Zow! The intensity of this wine took me totally by surprise. Nothing too subtle here, just wave after wave of elemental citrus and pink grapefruit flavours jumping out of each glass! Taut and focused with mouth-watering acidity, great balance and a vibrant, juicy finish. Simply delicious.

RED

Averill Creek Foch·éh 09
British Columbia $19.00-21.00
Try this fruity little Foch·éh slightly chilled, maybe thirty minutes in the fridge. The chill will enhance the fruit and after the third glass you will ask yourself why did that nasty old wine critic call this a fruity little Foch·éh, because it is anything but. Yes, it is fruity, carbonic maceration will do that to a wine, but little, mais non, this is no little Foch·éh, it is a big Foch·éh, with a big fruity nose and plenty of oomph on the palate. It is simple and fruity and a delight to drink.

Quinta de Ventozelo Vinzelo Douro 06
Portugal $17.00-19.00
If you ever go to Portugal you really must make the time to travel west up the Douro and into the vineyards responsible for the production of Port. The vistas are breathtaking and you will not be disappointed with the experience. As far as the table wines are concerned, they too are worth the effort to seek out. Vinzelo is an easy wine to like with gobs of ripe juicy fruit and just enough tannin to keep you coming back for more. Delicious.

Santa Julia Organica Malbec 08
Argentina $17.00-19.00
Everybody is looking for organic wine these days and for good reason. They are good to drink and good for the environment. Gone are the bad old days of the last century when organic was synonymous with terrifying. This Argentine Malbec is full-bodied and balanced with ripe berry flavours, fine-grained tannins and a long soft finish.

Mission Hill SLC Syrah 07
British Columbia $39.00-41.00
What we have here is a tightly wound, powerful, deep, brooding Syrah from the south Okanagan that needs a few more years to round out the already polished tannins and fully integrate the oak. It is black as pitch with dark fruit flavours and plenty of smoke, spice and vanilla nuances. It is one hell of a bottle of wine that will be worth the wait.

Fatalone Gioia Del Colle Organic Primitivo 05 Italy $17.00-19.00
So what's not to like about this potent red from the sunny climes of Puglia? The vineyard, a modest 6 hectares has been in the family for over 200 years, it is organic and the wine is well made and priced to sell. It has some age on it and the only drawback is that after the second bottle the name is impossible to pronounce and you will not be able to stand up. The wine you ask, what does it taste of? Well it is big and richly endowed (15% alcohol) with soft fruit flavours and that nose reminiscent of red cherries and warm dry earth that I find unique to Italian wines. It is very quaffable and when I can stand up again I will get another bottle.

Skillogalee Basket Pressed Shiraz 06 Australia $29.00-31.00
Skillogalee is a family owned winery, located high in the Clare Valley of South Australia. The area is famous for producing some of Australia's raciest Rieslings, but the Syrah can stand on its own merits too. This is cool climate Syrah at its best! Sleek and vibrant with ripe blackberry, eucalyptus, vanilla and spice flavours that just keep going. Powerful but fresh and supple and delightfully drinkable.

what's **online?** —by **Treve Ring**

We created *EATmagazine.ca*'s online DRINK column to satisfy your thirst - whether you thirst for knowledge or are just plain thirsty. Long time *EAT* contributor and sommelier Treve Ring is our online DRINK editor, and her timely and *tweet-y* wine, beer, spirit and cocktail reviews have been incredibly well received. This column will highlight a few of what's been drunk.

So what have we been Drinking? **The Vancouver Playhouse International Wine Festival** was huge – in every sense (both importance in the industry and size). *DRINK* previewed the theme regions New Zealand (with reliably vibrant and gooseberry fresh **Villa Maria Sauvignon Blanc**) and Argentina (via the lesser known grape Bonarda, from **Colonia Las Liebres**). During festival week, we put out an ATB (All Tweet Bulletin) to *EAT* writers, and received a flurry of tweets from the Playhouse tasting room floor:

{NZ tasting room treasures: **Astrolabe Sauvignon Blanc**, **Ata Rangi Crimson Pinot Noir**, **Elephant Hill Syrah**, **Oyster Bay Sparkling** & **Yealands Seaview Sauvignon Blanc**} *.com/EatMagazine*

twitter {Can Torontes be really good? Certainly, in the hands of **Tomas Achaval**. Stone fruit leaps from the glass–buoyed by racy acidity} twitter *.com/EatMagazine*

{Rah Rah Rose! In the words of **David Scholefield** "the preferred drink of women, & smart men.} twitter *.com/EatMagazine*

From the *Grand Tasting Floor* to *Rose-Rama* to Hermitage to *France Ooh La La*, and much more, we had a Rosé glow. Post-fest *DRINK* looked at **Sam Neill**'s silky and elegant **Two Paddocks Pinot Noir** – both producer and product full of character. Earth Day brought the organic **Château de Caraguilhes Domaine de L'Olivette Red** – juicy red fruit and, fittingly, earthiness, and the roving Naramata Bench tasting's highlight was **Van Westen's Vino Grigio**'s crisp pear and cool minerality.

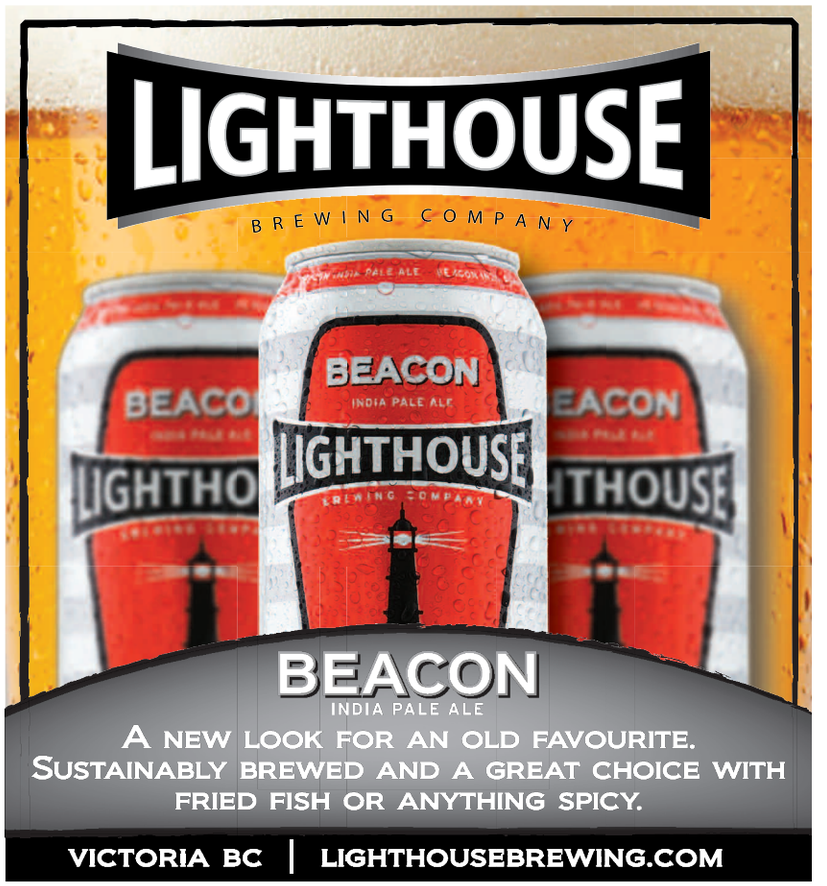
The cocktail hour...The seasonal opening of the **Empress Hotel**'s grand **Veranda** was the perfect opportunity to sip their signature **1908 Tea Cocktail**, centered around Empress blend infused vodka, and shaken to perfection by 40 year Empress employee bartender **Leonard Lim**! Mother's Day saw *DRINK* recommending breaking the piggy bank for a bottle of the elegant **Laurent Perrier Cuvée Rosé Brut NV** from Champagne. Fuller bodied, with fine mousse and notes of strawberry, cream, structure and grace – fit for a queen, a.k.a. Mom.

Time for a beer – or few...The inaugural **Vancouver Craft Beer Week** prompted cracking into a couple of microbrews. **Phillips Double Barrel Scotch Ale** impressed: Scotch Ale + Kentucky Bourbon barrels + Okanagan Cab Sauv barrels = complex, caramel peat layers. And **Driftwood Brewery**'s **Belle Royale** showed how a skilled brewer can squeeze a pound of Morello sour cherries into each bottle to make a brightly balanced brew.

Springtime BC wine release...**Bloom** – the VQA tasting introduced us to the Similkameen's heavy hitting **Clos du Soleil White** (Sauv/Sem, creamy, smooth lemon and mineral knockout) and Red (polished Meritage, with beautiful dusty gravel, warm jammy raspberry, cherry, cedar and herbs).

A quick jaunt to **Vegas** prompted a review of Rum, and a taste of **Mount Gay Rum**, said to be (Vegas-esque) the world's first and oldest distillery – founded in 1703. And a Victoria meeting with Seattle hotshot mixologist **Jim Romdall** prompted his cocktail creation **Island Nation** – Jim's homage to V.I. and producers **Sea Cider** and **Victoria Spirits**.

Visit *www.eatmagazine.ca/drink* to read full reviews of the DRINKS mentioned above, plus many others.



SUNSHINE IN A BOTTLE

Few beers are as perfect for hot-weather quaffing as wheat beer, or pair so easily with summery food like salads and seafood.

Here's an irony about one of the most refreshing, warm-weather summer beers: it's as cloudy as a late-February morning. OK, so maybe it's not as grey as most winter weather (though it should be served as cool!), but wheat beer is unique for its opacity and most examples are actually the colour of liquid sunshine.

But don't let this cloudy/hazy style of beer fool you, it may look "thick" or, well, just not very beer-like, but it's about as easy-drinking and refreshing as beer comes. Many people associate light ales and pale lagers with hot-weather quaffing, but none are as satisfying as wheat beer (which, unlike standard craft beers, is made with some wheat, rather than all barley malts). "They're lighter-tasting beers and they're lighter on the palate as well," says Yaletown Brewing company's brewmaster, Iain Hill, whose Hill's Special Wheat recently won gold at the BC Beer Awards, held during Vancouver Craft Beer Week in May.

Most wheat beers made in BC—like Hill's Special Wheat—are some version of a hefeweizen (hay-FUH-vites-in), a style that originated in Southern Germany, but has become popular in North America. The name literally means "yeast wheat" and is differentiated from other German *weisse* (wheat) beers by its cloudiness. This may be a bit confusing, but wheat beers *aren't* by definition cloudy. However, hefeweizen, as a result of the lack of filtering, most definitely is. So, why is it unfiltered? The simple answer is for added flavour and body. Much like wines left on their lees (spent yeast cells), complexity, character and (in beer's case) excellent carbonation is imparted to the beer by leaving it unfiltered.

This isn't just any yeast, though. Traditional Bavarian-style hefeweizen—such as those made by Granville Island, Tree and Okanagan Springs, among others—is made with a special strain that helps give the beer some of its refreshing properties. "They are usually [flavours] that you would think of as fruity and herbal, maybe slightly spicy and tropical," says Adam Henderson, owner of beer importing business, Rain City Brands, and a trained cicerone (beer sommelier).

This is a beer just made for light summery foods (and a few unexpected pairings, as well). "They can go really well with salads, meats, fish, even lighter desserts—like things with banana in them—which go well with the hefeweizens that have banana flavours in them. I like hefeweizen with Thai food, because peanut sauce is really cool with some of the banana notes. I did a pairing with peanut satays and hefeweizen and the idea was peanut butter and banana sandwiches. It works really, really well."

Many of the characteristics that make it good for pairing with food, are also what make it such a satisfying summer refresher. "The kind of flavours you get in wheat beers lend themselves to session drinking," says Hill. "[Hefeweizens] are not hoppy at all and they're not traditionally high in alcohol. It's a really great beer to go to for lots of flavour, but it's not crazy demanding on your attention."

Hefeweizen isn't the only wheat beer style being brewed in BC. Belgian-style witbier (Belgian for "white beer," due to the pale yellow colour), which is traditionally made with a special Belgian yeast and the addition of dried Curaçao orange peel and coriander, is also growing in popularity. Local examples such as Driftwood's White Bark and Central City's Red Racer White Ale are brewed year round, while others brew it seasonally in the summer. Though some of the specific flavours in witbier differ from hefeweizen, they share many traits—"ample carbonation; generally a fairly dry character, a dry finish; and a lot of depth of playful flavour," Henderson says—that make wheat beers so likable.

As for food pairing, many of the same guidelines apply. "Witbiers go really well with simply prepared seafood," says Henderson. "Anything you have that is light and fresh. It's not a hugely powerful beer and there's a lot of subtlety in the flavour."

"Of course it goes well with things like salads, because of its lightness and the weight of the flavours," Yaletown's Hill adds, "but the spiciness [of the beer] also really marries well with high-note, spicy-character food, like Thai curry."

Sure, wheat beers may be cloudy, but a tall, cool one (perhaps served with a slice of citrus, if that's your thing) on a hot sunny day is unbeatable. "When the patio is open [at Yaletown Brewing] and we have a heat wave, the Hill's Special Wheat is the number one seller. It's really neat to see how the hefeweizen takes off. Everyone on the patio starts drinking it and it kind of spreads."

DRESSED UP & READY TO GO!

*For dinner out, a family gathering, home parties or kicking back at the cabin, **Tinhorn Creek** has the wines for the occasion. ~ Our **vineyards** are located on two unique and diverse south Okanagan sites: the **Golden Mile** and the **Black Sage** bench. Our ability to blend the grapes from these vineyards and capture the best characteristics of each site sets us apart. ~ Visit our spectacular estate winery in **Oliver, BC** and experience for yourself.*

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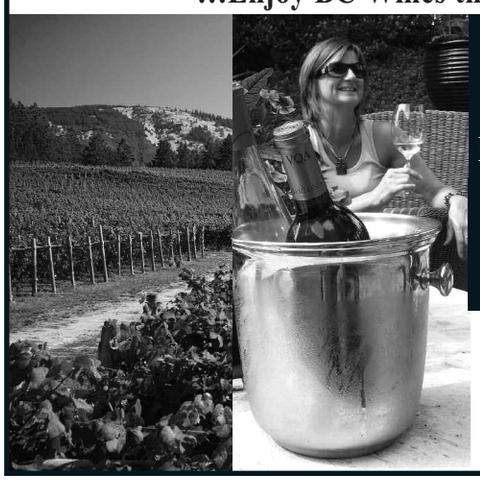

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VALUE-ADDED VINEYARD

The Cowichan Valley's Saison Market Vineyard grows grapes, wine preserves, brioche, quiches, cakes, frangipane tarts, granola and many more housemade delights. *By Gillie Easdon*

"We are grape growers ... a vineyard with a farm market and bakery. That's it," asserts Ingrid Lehwald of Saison Market Vineyard in North Cowichan. They do not have a menu. They are not a restaurant. You cannot make reservations. The market is simply open on the weekends to support the vineyard, expecting its first, full, high-density crop of Pinot Gris, Gewürtztraminer, Pinot Noir and Seigerrebe grapes in 2012. Frederic Desbiens and Ingrid Lehwald, the proprietors, intend to sell the grapes to local wineries. That's all fine. The problem is, well, people keep showing up en masse. People keep calling. People keep trying to come for lunch. All it took was a stunning drive across the Malahat on a sleepy Sunday afternoon to discover why,

I roll onto the property and at once wish I'd packed a bag and brought a book. Saison Market Vineyard is nestled into the valley, surrounded by teeming verdant hills draped in a soft mist. Budding tender grape vines line the field. It is still. The air is cold and moist and smells like sweet rain and dark soil. I pull into the quite full parking area and make my way to the market.

Inside: burnished brown, acid-stained floors and walls the colour of churned butter, with windows that open onto the vineyard below. Outside: a generous patio for less dewy days. Wall shelving displays lavender and wheat bouquets ("the perfect hostess gift,"); preserves of plum and star anise, port and fig, and pear and pinot gris (which I try; bright and luxurious adjunct to a blue cheese); rich granolas, dried herbs and other housemade delights.

In the bakery, I find brie and pear focaccia, chocolate brioche, quiche Lorraine, rosemary bread and sour cherry frangipane tarts to name but a few of the offerings. Ingrid Lehwald's Teutonic roots show with the rhubarb crumble cake, apple kuchen and "Bienenstich," which means bee sting, a traditional light yeast dough cake with a honey almond topping and a cream filling. Lore suggests that a bee, enticed by the honey-laced delicacy, stung the creator, thus its name. Its combination of light cake contrasting with the rich cream and moist almond honey topping is delicious. The size of the slice seems daunting at first, until I realize I've polished it off. The Chocolate Mousse Cake for Two is also exquisite, and unlike most of the items in the dazzling glass cases, it is bereft of an ingredients list, which I appreciate. I can guess what went into that dessert; all that is heavenly and naughty at once.

There are tables and chairs to enjoy a bite, but again, Saison Market Vineyard is not a restaurant. The very basic help-yourself coffee thermoses, water jugs and paper cups suggest this, but by the looks of the packed room, I am not sure how many take the hint.

Frederic Desbiens and Ingrid Lehwald bought the property four years ago. They moved to Vancouver Island "to have more space, and more land." Frederic, a Quebec City native, is a chef trained in Beaune in Burgundy where he developed his affinity for the Pinot Noir grape. More recently he was executive chef at the Bacchus bistro at Domaine de Chaberton, a winery south of Langley. He crafts the savoury and the more decidedly French desserts. Ingrid, trained by a French Poilane baker in the Napa Valley, was a baker at Fieldstone bakery in Crescent Beach, White Rock. Frederic and Ingrid had a stall at the Duncan Farmers' Market before deciding to build the market on their property in 2009.

As I leave, I scan the small farmstand outside stocked with lettuce, a few Seigerrebe grape seedlings and some perennials. I wander back to the car, loaded up with a bit of this and a bit of that. With a wistful glance back, and humming a snatch of a Carol King tune ("Winter, spring, summer or fall, all you have to do is call"), I depart, happy.

Saison Market Vineyard, 7575 Mays Rd., North Cowichan, 250-597-0484
9-4 Saturday and Sunday. Closed January for pruning. www.saisonmarket.ca.

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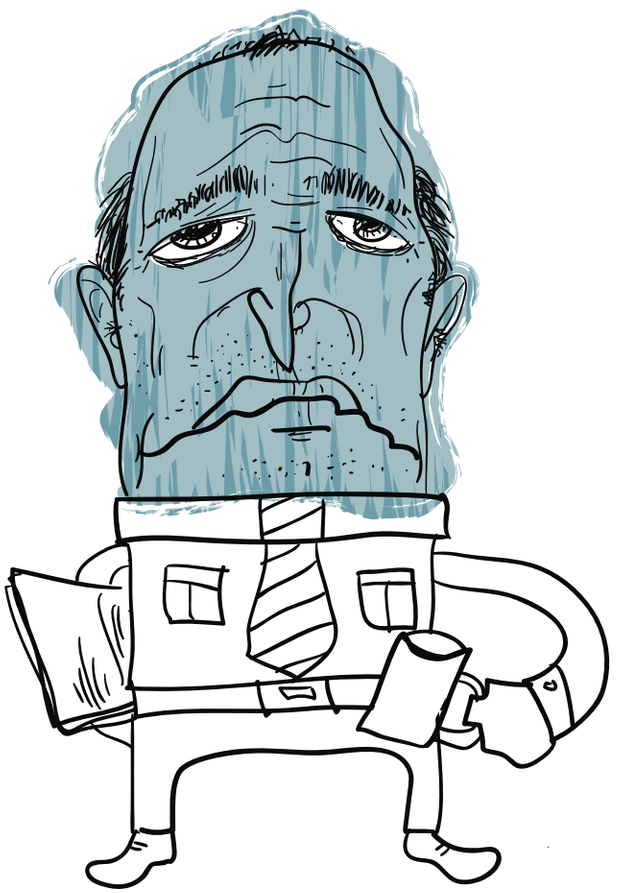
SUMMER'S HANGOVER CURE

Hotter temperatures and improved viticultural techniques mean boozier wines. In search of a more salubrious tipple, Michelle Bouffard and Michaela Morris discover light and refreshing summer wines with less alcohol.



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Once upon a time, we could knock back a couple of glasses of wine and feel all the better for it the next day. We would wake up early with lots of energy and be highly productive. In the last couple of years we have noticed a terrifying change. The morning after a healthy tipple we experience the vague pangs of a headache, slight lethargy and the desire to eat copious amounts of greasy food. We certainly weren't drunk or even tipsy the night before, yet this is too close to a hangover for comfort. Is this a sign, heaven forbid, that we are getting older?

Desperate to know the cause, we started paying more attention to our drinking habits. Satisfied that we were balancing our intake with sufficient water and food, we scrutinized the bottles in our recycling bin. Looking carefully at the labels, we discovered the culprit. Alcohol! Most wines were 13.5 to 15 percent. A decade or two ago the average alcohol volume of a bottle of wine was closer to 12.5 percent. OK, so we were also younger then, but an increase of a couple of degrees more alcohol does make a difference, especially the morning after.

The fundamentals of winemaking have not changed. Sunshine produces sugar in grapes, which is converted to alcohol through fermentation. Grapes with more sugar have potentially higher alcohol. Over the years, significant improvements and understanding of viticultural techniques have enabled grape growers to harvest riper, more concentrated grapes—a welcome evolution. Some growers push the envelope further, leaving grapes to hang on the vine well past conventional ripeness leading to even higher sugar levels. This combined with hotter summers associated with global warming have resulted in boozier wines.

We have nothing against wines that are higher in alcohol as long as there is enough fruit to balance it. What is better than nursing a rich heady red while warming yourself by the fire in the wintertime? A word of warning though: even if you don't "taste" the alcohol or feel a burn, it will still go to your head quicker. We've learned this from personal experience. A wine with less alcohol allows us to drink a few more sips before we get tired and silly.

As the weather heats up and we head outdoors, our bodies naturally crave something lighter and lower in alcohol, be it white or red. The long warm days encourage leaving work early to soak up the sun on a patio. Sunny weekends are spent poolside, picnicking or boating. Wine makes all of these activities even more enjoyable. Time stands still and one glass can easily turn into two or three. With the sun beating down, a wine at 14 percent will soon knock you out, but a wine at 11 percent can prolong your imbibing enjoyment. It will also be much more refreshing.

It is possible to find wines lower in alcohol from most regions and countries. This doesn't mean you need to inspect every bottle until you find one that clocks in at less than 13 percent. A couple of generalizations will guide you in your quest. Warmer climes tend to yield stronger wines. Long hot summers in Portugal, Australia, California and Mediterranean areas allow grapes to build up a substantial stash of sugar. Certain varieties like Grenache, Mourvèdre/Monastrell and Shiraz thrive in these conditions, producing brawny wines high in alcohol. Narrowing your search to cooler regions will increase your chances of finding wines lower in alcohol. The chilly reaches of Europe, like Germany and northern France, offer ample hunting ground. As an added bonus, the wines from these areas often possess refreshing acidity to revive you during a heat wave.

Germany is so cool it struggles to ripen grapes. The noble Riesling is one of the few varieties that has had overall success here, but what a triumph! It is often made with a touch of sweetness, but this is nothing to be afraid of. Well-made German Riesling balances that sugar with mouth-watering acidity. They can be as light as 8-9 percent. When quantity matters, remember that two glasses of a light and lovely German Riesling can equal one glass of a full-throttle Aussie Shiraz. Germany also provides delicious dry Rieslings, particularly from the regions of Rheingau and Pfalz. Beyond Germany, many regions around the globe like BC, Ontario, Alsace, Austria and Australia produce Riesling with sweetness levels ranging from off-dry to dry, many of which respect our 12.5 percent threshold.

In neighbouring France, the Loire Valley is a treasure trove of summer sippers. Both whites and reds tend to be skinnier with a vibrant backbone of acid. This style of wine is not necessarily fashionable, especially when it comes to the reds, but it should be embraced. They are charming, refreshing and extremely food-friendly. Light and tangy Muscadet is a natural with oysters and guaranteed to be no more than 12 percent. A host of other white wine appellations feature either the fresh and vibrant Sauvignon Blanc or the pretty and vivacious Chenin Blanc. For reds, expect Cabernet Franc or Pinot Noir and sometimes even Gamay or lighter versions of Cabernet Sauvignon. We highly recommend serving these reds slightly chilled.

Don't leave the French section without considering Bordeaux and Burgundy. From the latter, Chablis is our pick for the summer. The wines are made exclusively from Chardonnay yet are uncluttered by oak. Most entry-level Chablis sits under 13 percent. Steely and minerally, it is *de rigueur* with the season's more sophisticated dinners. Bordeaux might not suggest summer initially, but besides full-bodied reds the region supplies a bounty of crisp whites with moderate alcohol. Here, Sauvignon Blanc may be blended with Semillon. If you do want a serious red during the summer months, don't shy away from Bordeaux. In terms of alcohol, 12.5 percent used to be considered high. Now many are pushing 14 percent. Thankfully, many ripe yet elegant examples at 12.5 percent can still be found.

Known for its sweet and strong port and full-figured reds, Portugal is more readily associated with winter drinking. The wines from the northwest region of Vinho Verde make for a sharp contrast. Styles vary, but most of what we see is a light lively white that is slightly fizzy and often off-dry. According to the laws of the region, they aren't (except for one Vinho Verde sub-region) even allowed to exceed 11.5 percent. This, along with an average price point of $10-12, make it the ultimate summer guzzler. If you fall in love with Vinho Verde as we have, make sure you venture beyond the more commercial brands described above. There is a serious side of Vinho Verde waiting to be discovered.

Beyond the tried and true, there are plenty of lower alcohol wines when you start scouring the shelves. The summer stretches ahead giving ample opportunity to explore these docile gems. They won't grant eternal youth but when consumed in moderation they won't make you feel you've aged 10 years the next morning either. When it comes to alcohol, less truly does mean more.

Lower Alcohol Wines

SPARKLING

Mionetto, Prosecco Brut Spumante, Italy, 11%, $19.99 (SKU: #08256)
Prosecco screams summer. Treat your guests to a refreshing glass the next time you entertain. It will keep them patiently waiting in the backyard while you finish getting ready.

Oyster Bay, Sparkling Cuvée Brut, New Zealand, 12%, $24.99 (SKU: #916346)
100 percent Chardonnay. A great discovery during our recent visit to Kiwi land. Thirst-quenching flavours of fresh grapefruit and lemon and a delicate mousse that tickles the palate. Sushi time!

WHITE

nv Gatão, Vinho Verde DOC, Portugal, 9%, $10.99 (SKU: #796201)
The perfect sipper for a lazy afternoon. Slightly effervescence, it is a tasty replacement for the classic spritzer if you add a few ice cubes. We promise not to tell anyone ...

2008 Mouton Cadet, Bordeaux AOC, France, 12%, $13.98 (SKU: #002527)
We were very happy to revisit this old staple. Vibrant lime and lemon flavours wake up your palate and keep you cool on a hot day. Try with seafood ceviche.

2009 Bodega François Lurton, Pinot Gris, Valle de Uco, Argentina, 12.5%, $13.99 (SKU: #556746)
A perennial favourite, this wine never disappoints. Bursting with succulent pear and lemon notes. Very easy to drink on its own but equally satisfying with seafood and salads of all kinds.

2008 Peter Lehmann, 'Clancy's' Semillon, Sauvignon Blanc, Australia, 11.5%, $16.99 (SKU: #791848)
Australia is not typically known for wine with lower alcohol. Discover the exception to the rule. Invigorating flavours of lanolin and key lime. The ideal companion for a boating excursion.

2008 Schloss Reinhartshausen, Riesling Dry, Rheingau, Germany, $19.99, 12% (SKU: #219147)
We can always count on German Riesling when seeking lower alcohol wine. And here is proof that Riesling is not automatically sweet. Reinhartshausen is completely dry and has fantastic steely notes. Hello barbecue ribs!

2008 Domaine Servin, Chablis AOC, France, 12.5%, $28.90*
A great example of a well-priced, entry-level Chablis to impress your guests. Earthy and leesy with appealing white grapefruit, red currant and mineral notes. Serve with a bountiful salad of summer greens and local goat cheese.

RED

2008 Alasia, Dolcetto d'Asti DOC, Italy, 12.5%, $22-25*
We sure have a weakness for Dolcetto and even more so when it's light in alcohol. Concentrated and charming red plum and cherry notes. Chill slightly and pack in your picnic basket.

2006 Manoir de la Tête Rouge, 'Bagatelle' Saumur AOC, France, 12.5%, $28-32*
100 percent Cabernet Franc. Red and refreshing? This wine demonstrates that it is indeed possible. Bright crunchy raspberries, cedar and pleasant leafy notes with crisp acidity. Mouth-watering! A delicious match with squab and grilled meats.

2000 Château Haut Breton Larigaudière, Margaux AOC, France, 12.5%, $68-75*
A great choice if you want to indulge. Elegant and silky with complex flavours of cedar, cassis, leather and minerals. An absolute treat with rack of lamb. Appropriate year round!

**Available at private wine stores only. Prices may vary.*

SIX MILE LIQUOR STORE LAUNCHES COMPUTERIZED WINE & FOOD PAIRING SYSTEM

The most frequently asked question at wine shops is what wine should I have with my dinner tonight? Staff are challenged to recommend a wine to go with whatever dish the customer is serving. To assist staff in helping the wine buying public, store manager Russell Gelling has installed a computerized food and wine pairing system called *Ask Ginger*.

Although it looks like a typical ATM kiosk *Ask Ginger* dispenses suggestions (rather than cash) along with printed recipes and wine descriptions. For example. You are planning to serve a pasta dish that night and need a wine to go along with it. Type *p a s t a* into *Ask Ginger* and she'll ask you what kind of sauce? vegetables? Then, once you've narrowed down the recipe ingredients you pick a price range for the wine. Under $20? $20-$30? etc. Choose your price point and up pop a dozen or so suggested wines to pair with your dinner. You can even take a print out home that describes the wine you've just purchased.

Or here's another way it can work. You have a favourite wine in mind but don't know what to serve with it. Simply grab the bottle and hold it up to the machine and *Ask Ginger* will scan the bottle code and offer up menu ideas. Decide on the recipe you want and print it out along with a shopping list of ingredients. What could be simpler?

Ask Ginger also does pairings for beers, cocktails and spirits. One of only a handful of places to install an *Ask Ginger* in BC, Russell says his staff loves it. It helps them narrow down the possibilities and choices from their nearly 3,000 bottle inventory. *—G. Hynes*

Six Mile Liquor Store, 498 Old Island Highway, Victoria, BC

FINE RUMS

Centuries of refinement have turned the rough and tumble spirit into a connoisseur's delight.

Kill-devil, one of rum's original names, doesn't sound like a connoisseur's tipple. And indeed, rum does have a sordid history; it was, after all, a key element in the African slave trade and at its inception was rough stuff. However, after centuries of refinement, the age of fine rums is certainly upon us.

Created when Europeans started growing sugar cane in the Caribbean, rum is fermented from molasses, a by-product of converting sugar cane into sugar. If you ferment it, then distill it, you have rum. In fact, it was the plantation slaves who first discovered that molasses could be fermented into alcohol and were probably the first ones to drink it.

The first rums, however, were apparently foul and unrefined. At the time, Europeans drank imported brandy, wine and beer. It was the Dutch, being master distillers and merchants, who soon started refining rum into a commodity that could be sold around the world.

By the 19th-century, many different styles of rum had evolved throughout the Central American islands. Old bartending guides always referred to the style of rum by the country of origin.

One of the most important styles to arise was Cuban rum or white rum. White rum was created by the Bacardi family, which made its rum in Cuba until the rise of Communism, when they moved the operation to the Dominican Republic. Bacardi rum is the backbone of such famed cocktails as the daiquiri, mojito, Cuba Libra and the Bacardi cocktail. During prohibition, American's flocked to Cuba to drink and fell in love with rum.

Other Caribbean islands specialize in aging rums. Some distilleries age and blend to produce consistent products. Others release single-barrel rums from their best casks. The "solaris" system is also popular, in which a small part of the oldest batch of rum is added to the younger rums to make complex and consistent bottles. Aged rums, often called sipping rums, rival the best Scotches and brandies at a much lower price.

Many people are familiar with Rogue beer from Oregon. (If you're not, please go out for a pint of Rogue Dead Guy ale posthaste.) Recently, the microbrewery has also become a micro distillery. Far away from the Caribbean they produce white rum, dark rum and hazelnut spiced rum. I find myself most excited by the white, which is surprisingly smooth and full of character. The nose is delicate with molasses, honey, hazelnut, rose and apricot pit notes. A viscous mouth-feel carries sugar cane and ripe peach notes. Rogue White Rum is perfect for adding a layer of complexity to a white rum cocktail.

Cruzan Single Barrel Estate Rum, from the U.S. Virgin Islands, is the go-to rum for recipes calling for St. Croix rum. Cruzan is a beautiful amber colour with a nose full of honey and ripe melon. At first sip you get vanilla, nutmeg and white pepper joining dried pineapple and traces of other tropical fruit.

Zaya 12-year-old Grand Reserva from Trinidad is a bartender's candy. This deep, reddish amber rum gives off pungent molasses, candy and honey scents backed with deep oakiness and tobacco. The mouth-feel is lush with a marathon-like finish and hints of stone fruits and vanilla. Have some on the rocks with Fentimans Ginger Beer and fresh lime juice for a Dark and Stormy that will knock your socks off.

Treacle De Lux

The Treacle, made with bitters and apple juice, is a dark rum cocktail popular with bartenders. Here's my take on it.

45ml (1.5oz.) Zaya 12 Rum
60mL (1oz.) Pommeau de Normandie (French Apple Liqueur)
3 dashes Chartreuse Élixir Végétal (71% version of Chartreuse)
3 Dashes of Bitter Truth Aromatic Bitters

Double old fashion glass with a large ice sphere or two of the biggest ice cubes you can get. Or for that matter I think this tastes great in a snifter and room temp.

MORE RUM: Mount Gay calls itself "The rum that invented rum". Catchy. Eclipse is a gold rum – a blend of single and double distilled rums, and shines a bright true-to-its-name gold in the glass. Rich molasses and sweet floral aromas saunter out of the glass, along with light flavours of caramel, banana, spice, pepper, almond and vanilla. Honey smooth and lengthy, though light.

If you want to try a super premium Mount Gay rum, look for their **1703 Old Cask Selection** ($125-150), blended with the best bourbon-cask aged rums from the past 10-30 years.

—Treve Ring

SUMMER FESTIVALS AT MOUNT WASHINGTON

Beerfest, The Wine Festival, and The Alpine Food Festival

Vancouver Island is no stranger to festivals during the summer. This is also true of the island's premier alpine resort, Mount Washington. The resort has boasted a long tradition of sell out summer events and summer 2010 is no different.

For the past 11 years running Mount Washington has hosted its famous Beerfest. The name says it all, the resort invites a bevy of breweries who all bring their newest and greatest concoctions for Beerfest revelers to sample. The evening is complemented with live music that helps create a real party atmosphere. This year's Beerfest will be happening on July 09, 2010 and it will feature Canadian ska-music sensations The Kiltlifters!

The Alpine Wine Festival is an even longer standing tradition for the resort. Going on 12 years in row this festival will bring out the oenophile in everyone. The Alpine Wine Festival is spread out over two evenings. The first night, Friday August 6, features a tasting with wine, cider and mead vendors coming from all over BC. The second night, Saturday August 7, features a wine pairing dinner. Select wines are paired with delectable dishes created by the resort's top chefs. The meal is usually several courses and exquisitely prepared.

September long weekend is the perfect time to have a festival highlighting the produce and bounty of the summer's harvest and Mount Washington's Alpine Food Festival seeks to do just that. The festival runs from September 3 to 5 beginning with a wine and cheese welcome reception, a wide variety gourmet cooking classes, a gala dinner featuring the best the Valley has to offer, and is concluded with the Alpine Marketplace and wild blueberry walking tours. Featuring locally grown food and globally inspired flavours, the weekend long event truly is a celebration of everything edible.

This year's Food Festival will feature celebrity chef Anthony Sedlak of Food Network's The Main. Guest chefs Tahera Rawji, author of the Simply Indian cookbook series, and Maria Elena, author of Mexican Culinary Treasures, as well as the Comox Valley's top chefs will be teaching cooking classes and performing demonstrations in the Alpine Market Place. It will be a great weekend that every Vancouver Island foodie won't want to miss.

To purchase tickets for any of these events, please visit mountwashington.ca or call the resort at 1-888-231-1499.

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